

New Curve to Stairway Design

by Charles Wardell

As a symbol of fine craftsmanship, curved stairways have made a valiant stand against automation. Even the factory-built ones have always been labor-intensive items. But that's starting to change. *Fiberwood Stairway* are true radius semicircle stairs that are built with modern techniques to achieve a traditional result. The Fiberwood carriage is made from molded fiberglass, and includes the finished risers and skirtboards; the treads, railings, and balusters



are made from solid wood. The result, says the company that makes it, is a strong, squeak-free structure that looks like a traditional stair but that costs less and installs in a fraction of the time.

Contact Fiberwood Inc., 391 Soundview Rd., Guilford, CT 06437; 203/458-8920.

Against the Wind

Housewrap is meant to keep cold outside air from infiltrating exterior walls, where it can create drafts and lower the R-value of the wall insulation. But some builders see housewrap as overkill. Although most infiltration



happens at sheathing joints and around door and window frames, housewrap makers want you to wrap the entire house. And some research has suggested that real energy savings comes only when you tape the seams on the housewrap.

These facts apparently weren't lost on the makers of *Gap Wrap*. The self-adhering product is a cross between housewrap and housewrap tape. It lets you skip the full-wrap stage and go right to the seams. *Gap Wrap* works like housewrap in that it prevents cold air infiltration while allowing moisture in the wall to escape. But unlike housewrap, it's applied only at sheathing seams and around windows and doors, making it less expensive and easier to install. The 4-inch-wide, 200-foot-long rolls cost \$10.95 each. The manufacturer says that it takes about six rolls to seal a two-story, 1,600-square-foot house. A special tape dispenser is available for about \$30.

Contact Benjamin Obdyke Inc., John Fitch Industrial Pk., Warminster, PA 18974; 215/672-7200.

Metal Studs Made Easy

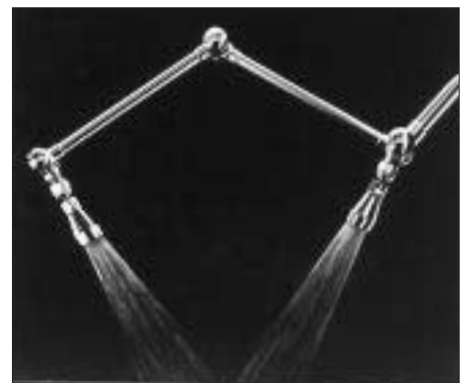
A lot of builders have tried metal framing as a cost-saving measure, only to go back to using wood. A big obstacle has been resistance from framing crews who couldn't make the switch from hammers to screw guns. But the *Carpenter's Steel Studlets* you easily blend steel studs with conventional framing.



The 8-foot-long stud is meant for non-bearing interior walls only. Three flanges on each end let you nail or staple the stud to standard wood top and bottom plates. The manufacturer claims that no special tools or skills are needed. If you need a shorter length, you can cut the stud with a power saw, snip the ends, and bend them to re-form the flanges. The studs also come with pre-drilled holes for plumbing and wiring. Because the holes are sized to accept plastic grommets, the studs can be wired with standard non-metallic sheathed cable.

Contact: HL Stud Corporation, 4726 Arlington Centre Blvd., Columbus, OH 43220; 614/451-8100.

Two's Company



Shower with a friend? It's easier with the *Shower Sensations* system. The device consists of a pair of shower heads that attach to a single fixture. The heads are positioned on either end of a multi-directional, 2-foot-long, extendable arm that adjusts vertically and horizontally, letting the bather get water from multiple angles. Each head will pivot and rotate independently, and each has its

own on/off valve.

The device meets new federal requirements that limit flow rates to 2.5 gallons per minute. It's available in polished brass or chrome and sells for \$129.95.

Contact: Hydrokinetic Designs Inc., 3840 Alhambra Ct., Coral Gables, FL 33134; 800/225-5800.

Quick Door Replacement



The *Secura-Fit* replacement door is similar in concept to a replacement window in that it gives you a new exterior door with minimal fuss. The product consists of an insulated 18-, 20-, 22-, or 24-gauge galvanized steel door hung in a 16-gauge adjustable steel jamb. It's insulated with a high-density polyurethane core, and made weathertight by a magnetic weatherstripping system and an adjustable door sweep.

To install the unit, you need to remove the old door, hinges, and interior casing. The existing jamb stays in place to serve as the new rough opening. The new jamb is secured to the framing with 2-inch-long security screws while the old casing is reinstalled to cover the *Secura-Fit*'s nailing flange. The manufacturer says that the unit can be installed without shims.

The *Secura-Fit* comes in various styles and in sizes that fit existing 2-6, 2-8, or 3-0 door jambs. List prices range from \$117 to \$320, depending on the model.

Contact: Benchmark Inquiry Dept., 12842 Pennridge Dr., Bridgeton, MO 63044; 314/298-0599. ■