

# Letters

## Change in Perspective

To the Editor:

Just a quick note to say thank you: This month's issue was useful and on target. I am a subcontractor, and sometimes I don't feel that every issue of *JLC* has something for me. Now I'm playing GC, building my own home, and suddenly every article speaks to me. Funny how a slight change in perspective can so greatly change your view.

Michael Davis  
via e-mail

## Insulation Upgrade Worth the Cost

To the Editor:

Andy Shapiro's summary (*On the House*, 7/01) of the diminishing returns from incremental increases in insulation R-value illustrates an important point. The analysis mentions that cellulose fills the cracks and gaps that typically occur in fiberglass insulation, but ignores the performance penalties associated with typical fiberglass batt installations. Research by Oak Ridge National Labs, the University of Massachusetts, and others has shown that these penalties can be quite severe. Using the same calculations as Andy's example but substituting the performance values that we use for typical attic fiberglass jobs in our building simulations, I arrived at the following:

Attic insulation R-value	Annual fuel cost for attic heat loss
R-11	\$298
R-19	\$182
R-30	\$126
R-38 (typical)	\$110
R-38 (best)	\$84

These represent typical installations with frequent, but not excessive, gaps and compression and typical wiring and plumbing obstructions. The "best" R-38 represents an extremely picky

installation: trimmed neatly around all obstructions, fluffed to full thickness, and with no compression or wind washing at the eaves. Such an installation is attainable for a conscientious builder, but in my experience, if you want that kind of job from an insulation contractor, you definitely have to pay for it (probably more than you would to upgrade to cellulose!). The heating costs Andy shows for R-40, 50, and 60 (\$59, \$47, and \$39) are quite reasonable for 12, 15, or 18 inches of cellulose, respectively, in a flat attic.

So what about the value of upgrading insulation? At \$290 to go from a typical R-38 batt to R-50 cellulose, the savings will be more like \$63 per year, which is less than a five-year payback. If you look at upgrading R-30 fiberglass to R-60 cellulose, at \$500 or less for a 1,200-square-foot attic, the savings of about \$87 per year easily justifies the expense, with a payback of less than six years.

I agree with Andy that nobody complains about having too much insulation (as long as the job is done right), but I think that in the real world the economics look much better than he suggests. And, of course, if fuel prices continue to rise, the payback just gets better!

Bruce Harley  
Conservation Services Group  
Westboro, Mass.

## No Satisfaction

To the Editor:

I have to take issue with the title of your sidebar "Some Satisfaction from Shingle Suits" ("Have Asphalt Shingles Improved?" 7/01). GAF Timberline (30-year) shingles were installed in my new house in 1989 and began to fail in 1996. I went through the claim process and inspections with the hope of receiving some relief from the cost to remove the defective product. GAF paid me about \$2,700 toward the

# THE JOURNAL OF LIGHT CONSTRUCTION

A Hanley-Wood Publication  
www.jlconline.com

**Editor** Don Jackson  
**Associate Editors** Dave Crosby  
Dave Holbrook  
Martin Holladay  
Jon Vara  
**Managing Editor** Jill Mason  
**Illustrator** Tim Healey  
**Special Projects Editor** Josie Masterson-Glen  
**Contributing Editors** Ted Cushman  
Don Dunkley  
David Frane  
Carl Hagstrom  
Joe Stoddard  
**Webmaster** Braddock Bull  
**Corresponding Editors** Michael Byrne  
Henri de Marne  
Paul Fiset  
**Columnists** Paul Eldrenkamp  
Quenda Behler Story

**Production Director** Theresa A. Emerson  
**Art Director** Barbara Nevins  
**Graphic Designer** Annie Clark

**Circulation Director** Paul Rues  
**Customer Service Manager** Angela Packard  
**Marketing Associate** Amy Barcomb

**General Manager** Steven Bliss  
**Operations Director** Laurie Fielder  
**Office Manager** George Carpenter

**Group Publisher** Rick Strachan  
**Publisher** Neil Rouda

**President, Magazine Division** Peter M. Goldstone  
**Director, Magazine Operations** Ron Kraft



Published by Hanley-Wood, LLC

## JLC LIVE CONSTRUCTION TRAINING SHOW

**Show Director** Rick McConnell  
**Show Manager** Donna Ladd  
**Sales Manager** Tami Svarfar  
**Marketing Manager** Kevin Spaulding  
**Conference Manager** Sherry Daniels  
**Construction Events Manager** Don Dunkley  
**Sales Associates** Ed Brennan  
Don Alter  
**Operations Coordinator** Katina Billado  
**Administrative Assistant** Suzanne Lavallee

## CORPORATE

**Chief Executive Officer** Michael M. Wood  
**President** Frank Anton  
**Executive Vice President** Jack Brannigan  
**Chief Financial Officer** James D. Zielinski  
**Chief Operating Officer** Fred Moses  
**V.P., Finance** John Dovi  
**V.P., Circulation & Database Dev.** Nick Cavnar  
**V.P., Human Resources** Jeff Fix  
**V.P., Production** Joanne Harap  
**V.P., Marketing** Ann Seltz  
**Business Systems Manager** Kari Christianson  
**Director, Information Technology** Aaron Packard



## JLC Information Directory

[www.jlconline.com](http://www.jlconline.com)

### Mailing Address:

*The Journal of Light Construction*

186 Allen Brook Lane

Williston, VT 05495

802/879-3335

**Editorial:** We welcome letters and

article submissions from readers.

Keep copies of all original materials.

Contact us by mail at the address above,

Attn: JLC Editorial Dept, or via e-mail at

[jlc-editorial@hanley-wood.com](mailto:jlc-editorial@hanley-wood.com).

**Subscriptions:** To order a new or renewal

subscription, visit our Web site at

[www.jlconline.com](http://www.jlconline.com), or call 800/375-5981.

For assistance with your current subscrip-

tion, e-mail us at [jlc-cs@hanley-wood.com](mailto:jlc-cs@hanley-wood.com),

call us at 800/375-5981, or write us at The

Journal of Light Construction, P.O. Box

420234, Palm Coast, FL 32137. Subscription

rates for qualified readers in construction

trades: \$39.95/1 year, \$64.95/2 years. Non-

qualified readers: \$59.95 per year. Sales tax

required on subscriptions to CA (7.25%), DC

(5.75%), GA (4%), IL (6.25%), NY (4%), TX

(6.25%), VT (5%). Group rates available on

request. Back issues/single article requests:

\$4.95 each plus \$5 s&h per order.

**Reprints:** For custom reprints (quantities of

500 or more), call Wilda Fabelo at PARS

International Corp., 212/221-9595 ext. 324.

**JLC LIVE:** For information about attending a

JLC LIVE conference or seminar, contact

us online at [www.jlclive.com](http://www.jlclive.com) or call

800/552-1951 (ext. 132); for exhibitor or

sponsor information, call Ed Brennan at

802/244-6257 (ext. 181), Don Alter at

802/496-5670 (ext. 182), or Tami Svarfvar

at 802/479-9526 (ext. 184). To request a

press pass, call Kevin Spaulding at

802/879-3335 (ext. 133).

**JLC Bookstore:** Visit our bookstore online

at [www.jlcbooks.com](http://www.jlcbooks.com). You can order from

our secure Web site, call us at 800/859-

3669, or order by mail at the address

above, Attn: JLC Bookstore.

**JLC-Update:** Subscribe to our monthly

e-mail newsletter for residential and light

commercial contractors. It's free to JLC

readers, and each issue contains industry

news and the latest tips on materials, tech-

niques, tools, and technology. Subscribe

online at [www.jlc-update.com/subscribe](http://www.jlc-update.com/subscribe).

\$9,000 estimate. I had to remove the defective shingles and install new ones — hardly sufficient compensation.

Tim Jahnigen

via e-mail

### Lumber Grading Distinctions

To the Editor:

Don Dunkley's response to Carl Mezzoff's letter (*Letters*, 7/01) does not address the fact that a 2x6 is graded more stringently than a 2x10 due to imperfections in the lumber being a disproportionately higher percentage of the cross-sectional area of the piece. A 2x10 notched or ripped down to the size equivalent of a 2x6 does not make it equal to a properly graded 2x6.

Eric Marten

Columbus, Ohio

### Pullout Step Stool

To the Editor:

The article "User-Friendly Kitchens" (*Kitchen & Bath*, 5/01) shows an under-cabinet pull-out step stool for reaching high cabinets but makes no mention of the manufacturer. I am interested in finding a supplier; I already have a customer interested in having one installed.

Brett Van Sickle

via e-mail

*The pull-out step stool shown in the article is made by Häfele (336/889-2322; [www.hafeleonline.com](http://www.hafeleonline.com)); Rev-a-Shelf (800/762-9030; [www.rev-a-shelf.com](http://www.rev-a-shelf.com)) also makes one.*

### Invisible Deck Fasteners

To the Editor:

After reading your article on hidden deck connectors ("Hidden Deck Fasteners," 5/01), I thought I would provide your readers with a simpler, less expensive, and faster alternative. I looked at all of the hidden fasteners and came up with my own alternative, which has outstanding customer acceptance. I simply sister 2x2s the full length of each joist, then glue down my deck boards with exterior construction adhesive. This gives 3 inches of holding surface at every contact for outstanding adhesion. The next day I come back and

blind nail from underneath through the 2x2 into the deck board with galvanized ring-shank nails. This gives a tight, non-squeaking, and non-nail-popping deck with no visible fasteners. On a ground-level deck where you can't nail from underneath, I use my finish nailer with stainless-steel finish nails. I set my gun to countersink the nails, placed with the grain, so they're still invisible.

John Wilder

John's Handyman Service

Rosemount, Minn.

### Drywall Clips

To the Editor:

I need a source for the drywall clips you mention in your July issue (*Notebook*, 7/01). Thanks.

Tom Davis

via e-mail

*Drywall clips are available from the following manufacturers: The Millennium Group in Estes Park, Colo. (800/280-2304; [www.milpond.com](http://www.milpond.com)); Prest-on Company in Hot Springs, Ark. (800/323-1813; [www.prest-on.com](http://www.prest-on.com)); Simpson Strong-Tie Co. in Dublin, Calif. (800/999-5099; [www.strongtie.com](http://www.strongtie.com)); and USP Lumber Connectors in Montgomery, Minn. (800/328-5934; [www.uspconnectors.com](http://www.uspconnectors.com)).*

**KEEP 'EM COMING!** Letters 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, 186 Allen Brook Ln., Williston, VT 05495; or e-mail to [jlc@bginet.com](mailto:jlc@bginet.com).

