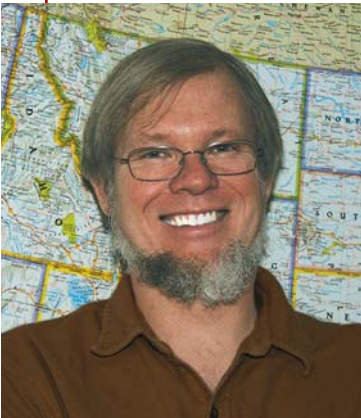


## EDITOR'S LETTER

# Are You Committed?



It's a Wednesday in mid-October as I write this. The Dow just took a powder, as it did on Monday, though it had recovered on Tuesday. Oil, at least, costs half what it did two months ago. Still, the lower price of oil is mixed news, being the result of reduced demand because of an expected worldwide recession.

These current problems will ring familiar to anyone who remembers the late 70s and the late 80s – not exactly the same, unless the effect is that you're sitting at home waiting

for the phone to ring. Then it is exactly the same. And unless this economy turns around soon, at least a few deck builders are going to be seeking greener pastures, just as some did in previous economic downturns.

That's too bad. It's sad to see businesses close, and it's even sadder to close them. I know – I've done that three times. Two of those times were good – I was pursuing better opportunities – but even then there was a sense of loss. The most recent time, I was tired. Tired of needy clients, tired of paying outrageous insurance bills, tired of dealing with endless government forms.

Mainly, I wasn't committed anymore. Involved, but not committed. The difference between commitment and involvement is, as an old joke says, like an egg and ham breakfast. The chicken is involved, but the pig is committed. Running a business takes commitment.

Anybody who runs a business knows that. Few people work longer hours than small-business

owners. But running a business isn't a matter of standing still, doing things the way you've always done them. You have to keep learning, for reasons beyond the possibility that you're missing some way to improve your bottom line. Heck, if you're making enough to get by, you can miss that sort of thing for decades and still pay the mortgage.

The thing is, the world changes around us. You have to keep up or risk making dangerous mistakes. I'm preaching to the choir here, because you're reading this magazine, doing your best to keep up. That's important. Good information goes a long way to keeping out of trouble, but finding good information can take commitment. At the least, you should read *all* the words in articles about safety and durability. Here's a story about a fellow who didn't. It might just keep you reading.

I did a public presentation recently, and I talked about corrosion and the Galvanic Scale. Now, you all know that when CCA preservative was replaced by ACQ, it became necessary to use at least hot-dipped galvanized fasteners. No more electro-galvanized stuff – it just doesn't hold up. I mentioned this in my talk. After the show, a very rattled man came up to verify what I'd said. You see, he'd heard about not using electro-galvanized fasteners in decks anymore, but he hadn't heard the hot-dip bit. For the last four years, he'd been building decks with plain old steel nails. ♦

Andy Engel  
Editor

**Built a great deck?  
We want to see it.**

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