



THE OBSERVER

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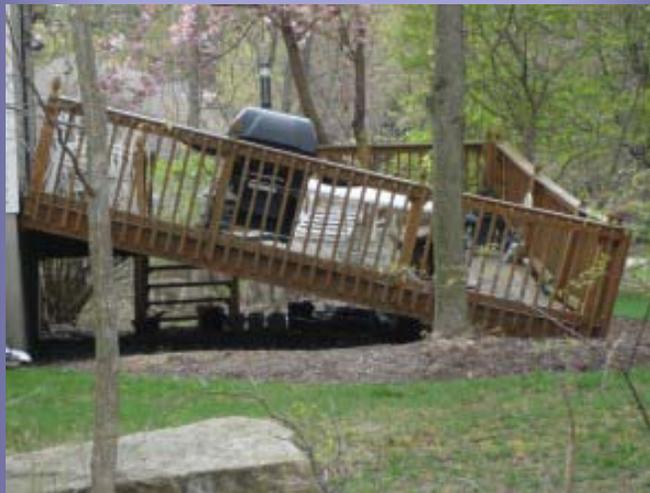
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www.cnyashi.com

★ **Deck Collapse?** ★
Not on my watch!

*I love deadlines. I like
the whooshing sound
they make as they fly
by
~Douglas Adams*



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We are always on the lookout for articles or items of interest. Anything which you feel would help educate our readership. Please feel free to forward to either Mike Chapman or

Tom Sherman. Also, if you should have any thoughts or ideas which you feel would make this a better publication, please let us know.

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WHAT'S NEXT...

MONTHLY CHAPTER MEETING

WHERE:: Tony's Restaurant
3004 Burnet Ave., Syracuse, NY 13206 (638-2930)

WHEN: Wednesday, February 13, 2013. 6:00 PM

What's wrong here?



This vent was tied directly to the outside. One very cold bathroom during the winter.



Once it has scorched, always recommend having the receptacle replaced. We do not know what condition the interior is in.



Why they walk

By Tom Sherman~ Editor

The reasons that consumers decide to walk away from a transaction after the inspection are as numerous as the stars in the sky. Here, I would like to focus on two of the most common in my experience.

Example 1:

Said buyer takes a quick walk through a house, looks at all the pretty things, and decides, "I could see myself living here." Schedules an inspection and, lo and behold, the place is a nightmare. Bad roof, bad heating system, bad electrical, bad foundation. Bad idea.

This example is rather easy to follow. The stars are aligned and, from their standpoint, it is seen as just a bad idea for them to have made the offer. They just failed to see it in time.

Example 2:

This might seem more difficult to figure out. This is the situation where a buyer goes through the whole process and at the conclusion, just doesn't have the warm fuzzy feeling that they had prior. Sometimes, it's not the huge things. They just no longer feel the love. They spent some time taking a closer look and decided this place isn't for them. Sub Example 2a.:

Other times, and this is very common, they "do the math."

The purchase not only needs to make sense from a purchaser's lifestyle perspective, it also has to stand on its own from a financial point of view. What I mean by this is they often look at, not only the current condition of major components, but also dig in with what needs to be replaced in the next few years. Some peripheral people interested in seeing the deal come to fruition often

will have a problem with this stance. "It's working OK today, right??" I've said this many times before. After the smoke clears and the checks are cashed, we who work in this faction; our work is done. Though the reality of the journey for the home buyer has just begun. And part of that journey very well may be replacing big ticket items sooner than they may have thought at the onset of an inspection.

Here's the point. Pass the information in a clear and concise manner! Damn the torpedoes! This was why we were employed in the first place. Our job is to give the client the means to make a sound decision. Don't disappoint them. Stay safe



Deck Fastener Corrosion

By Tom Sherman

References: Professional Deck Builder Magazine, Simpson Strong Tie.

Over the past few months, I have followed Peter Hotton's Q&A column in the Saturday Post Standard, and have been often disappointed with some of the advice he has given. Of note, was one where he completely missed the boat on a question related to dealing with a crawl-space below a building. I wondered then, as I do now, if anybody is vetting these answers, or is this information simply being viewed upon as solid.

After reading his reply regarding rusting deck fasteners, I feel the need to weigh in. First off, the most common item on a house that I find improperly constructed is a deck. These are often pounded together by folks who believe that having the ability to nail two boards together makes a carpenter. As a general rule, the higher up in the air the deck, the more skill is needed to ensure that it is properly constructed. This skill level is grossly lacking in many, many instances, resulting in unsafe and incomplete construction practices.

This past Saturday, I opened my newspaper and read the following: "The metal joist hangers that are holding together my deck



are rusting a lot. Should I be worried?" The answer given chilled me to the bone. The reply started with the word, "No." and went on to refer to the hangers being made from galvanized steel, therefore were rust-resistant. It also went into an explanation, stating that it may be "just a patina" which may keep the metal from rusting further. I should add that within 5 minutes of reading this article, I received a text from a fellow home inspector, alerting me of a local deck collapse that he had just learned about. Pressure treated wood used on decks that were constructed prior to 2004 was often treated with Chromated Copper Arsenate (CCA). One of the benefits from this treatment was the copper and arsenate would

assist in controlling corrosion to the fasteners. This chemical treatment was changed in 2004 due to health concerns over the use of arsenic (US) and Chromium (Europe). The companies manufacturing the chemicals for these products, in an effort to be consistent worldwide, developed replacement treatments which are Copper Azole (CA) and Alkaline Copper Quaternary (ACQ). (Sodium Borate-treated lumber is also in the mix, though we won't discuss that here. That was found, in testing, to be more corro-



sion-resistant that even CCA. Also, we won't spend time discussing the use of roofing nails, which are ever-present, to attach the fasteners, which is wrong, wrong, wrong. I'll let you research that yourself.)

These two replacement treatments, ACQ and CA do, pretty much, work as well in protecting the wood products from rot, though from the onset, differing levels of metal fastener deterioration began to develop. This was due to the lack of corrosive-inhibiting chromium and arsenic. The other issue here was the copper content in the newer treatments was much higher, which increased the galvanic reaction when this leached out of the lumber and came in contact with the fasteners. Add that to the ammonia which is also found in some of the CA and ACQ treatment, and we end up with a recipe for corrosive disaster. As the zinc coating gets eaten away from the underlying steel fasteners, it's just a matter of time before the deck is held aloft by those few toenails that were inserted temporarily into the joists until the hangers could be put in place. Not much of a comfort when you add a family on to the surface, is it?

A study that was done by Simpson Strong Tie determined that the corrosive-



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Thoughts to ponder:

"I've done the calculation and have determined that your chances of winning the lottery are the same whether you play or not."

Fran Lebowitz

"One man alone can be pretty dumb sometimes, but for real bona fide stupidity, there ain't nothin' can beat teamwork."

Edward Abbey

"A memorandum is written not to inform the reader, but to protect the writer."

Dean Acheson

The danger is not that a particular class is not fit to govern. Every class is not fit to govern

Lord Acton Kerr



Deck fastener corrosion

(Continued from Page 6)

ness of ACQ was twice as high as CCA, and other studies have found it to be 3 times as high. This is a high stakes game, especially when you have a deck that is 12 feet in the air.

In response to these conditions, the fastener manufacturers started rolling out newer and improved products that were meant to combat this situation. Polymer coatings are making their appearance, though they certainly haven't been seen on any of the decks that I have inspected. And, as always was the case, stainless steel is available, though this is rarely seen due to the much higher cost for the connectors and fasteners. Of course, when you think about it, the cost of the fasteners is but a mere pittance, when compared to the overall cost of the deck, so in reality, this would be the much safer bet all around when you use your head. Not so much, when you add the weekend warrior with a fixed budget into the mix. So due to the relatively low cost, I believe that we will be dealing with the galvanized fasteners for a long time, maybe forever, and we, as home inspectors need to make certain that we are paying close attention to these materials.

Simpson Strong Tie has a great site to research some of the testing and conclusions.

<http://www.strongtie.com>

All this time discussing decks and we haven't even touched on the whole flashing issue. We haven't discussed bolting ledgers to the house. We haven't discussed guard rail standards. We haven't discussed deck stairs or hand-rails. In fact, we have barely touched on what it takes to inspect a deck properly. Look at all the time we spent just discussing one very important aspect of the deck.

Look very closely at these fasteners, as they can very easily be death traps waiting to happen.



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UNDER THIS BANNER ARE FOUND THE WORLD'S FINEST HOME INSPECTORS



Eyeballs

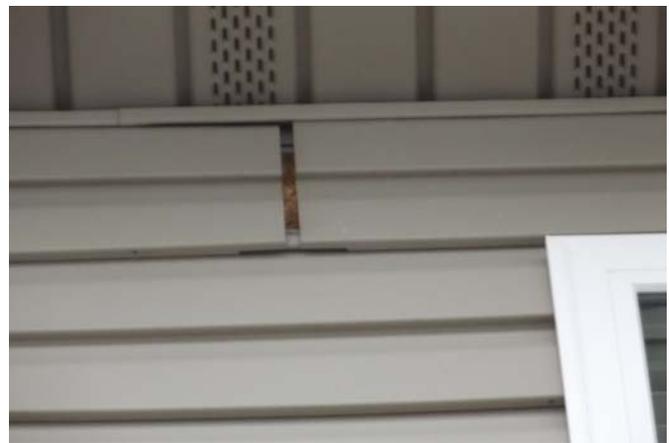


Below are two photos, provided by Tom Sherman. The photo to the left shows a condensate discharge from a high efficiency furnace located in the adjacent room. Caustic condensate will surely make for a "hot" shower on one's feet.

The photo to the right displays the lack of a building wrap behind vinyl siding. Just because it met "code" at time of construction, should not deter us from pointing out the obvious to our client. I would love to see this OSB in 10 years



Wood return vent



CNY-ASHI LIBRARY

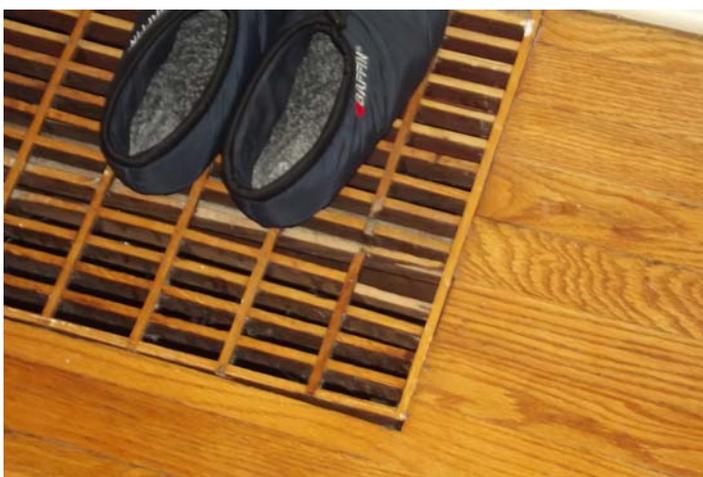
The chapter library is filled with books, videos and an assortment of other excellent training and refresher information relating to our profession. Everything from setting up and running a home inspection business, to technical journals and training information is at your fingertips.

As a chapter member, you are allowed to access this information free of charge. Dan has just put an updated list of the contents on the TRAINING PAGE of the CNY ASHI Website. Check it out.

We are always on the lookout for additional items for this library. Also, if you are looking for specific information on items we have, please contact

Dan at dhager3@yahoo.com

*Chapter Librarian, **Dan Hager~ Tyler Home Inspections***



Yes, they are all broken. Yes, they can easily become trap doors. Point them out and recommend replacement.

