

# CAHI MONTHLY NEWS



## Presidents Corner

**News Flash:** "Groundhog Day 2018: Punxsutawney Phil sees shadow, six more weeks of winter"

We all know at least one more big snow storm is looming as are the cold rains of March. Are you ready for when the weather breaks and the phone starts ringing more frequently?

While you have the opportunity, take the time to re-read all your paperwork and make sure it is doing what you want for you and your client. Does it do a great CYA job but alienates your client? Your clients are your greatest assets, your contract should be informative and put the client at ease that you are working for them and have their interests in mind.

Be sure to have Kent review your Inspection Contract before you present it to a client.

Are you using specialized software for your reports? Do you have a long list of canned statements?

How about links to websites for additional information? Now is the time to verify the links, and clean up the pre-prepared statements. Be sure to fix grammar, punctuation and spelling mistakes.

Simplify your writing where possible. Don't get too technical. You want to educate not confuse your clients.

As a final check, have a colleague, friend, spouse brother, sister, priest, Realtor, golf pro or such read a few of your reports. Ask them about the tone of the reports, how they felt about the houses in the reports, was the writing neat and clear?

Give them free reign to provide constructive criticism. Do not argue with them, do not try to explain to them, just listen (your spouse will enjoy this part).

Make notes on what they liked, what they didn't like, and how they felt about your reporting.

Look to make changes that clear up confusion, remove repetition, and promote the desired tone for your work.

This may be a difficult exercise but, you won't get better if you don't keep working at it.

Get ready, stay safe and be profitable!

Bill

February 2018 Volume 11, Issue 2

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Presidents Corner ..... 1
- Winter Marketing.....2
- The Coming Stucco Pocalypse.....5
- In My E-Mail.....11
- Emergency Visits Related to Flu...14
- Detail the Edge of a Tile Floor.....15
- Squeak Free Site Built Stairs.....17
- Editor's Rant.....21
- Cartoons.....26

## Meeting Dates!

**February 28th**

**Advanced Chimney Solutions**

**March 28th**

**Exterior Siding**

Presented by:  
Certain Teed

### MONTHLY MEETINGS – Details & Info

CAHI's regular monthly meetings are held at the Best Western located at 201 Washington Ave (RT 5), North Haven. Meetings are free to members.

Most meetings are on the fourth Wednesday of the month from 7-9pm.

Guests are always welcome! Guests may attend 2 free monthly meetings to experience our presentations, meet our members, and receive a CE attendance certificate.

Joining CAHI may be done at anytime of the year through our Membership Page

As your home starts to get colder, what do you do? I bet you walk over to the thermostat and turn on the heat.

**Editor's Note: This story appears in Working RE Home Inspector's NEW January Print Edition. OREP insureds enjoy it free! Now reaching 20,000+ Home Inspectors in Print and Online!**

# Winter Marketing: Have You Turned Up the Heat Yet?

By Mike Crow, Mastermind Inspector Community

As you get closer to winter and the weather turns cooler and then downright cold – what do you do?

In my first year of college I took a test and they told me: “Mike, you are an idealist.” I said: “No, that is not right. I am a realist– I expect things to go right when I do it.” In other words, I expect to have enough business to survive the winter profitably.

As your home starts to get colder, what do you do? I bet you walk over to the thermostat and turn on the heat, and the colder it gets, the more heat you want or the longer you want your heater to run. Or even better, the heating system adjusts for you to keep your home the same temperature, no matter how cold it is out there. You like having your home at a nice comfortable temperature—right?

So, apply this thought process to your business – how are you going to turn up the heat to keep the right amount of business coming in? Here are six responses to winter that can help your business.

## Winter Response #1

You have to make sure you pay close attention to every single lead opportunity you get. One of the things that we do is track the response from all our marketing and advertising as much as we possibly can. If we can't see that it is really doing anything, we might drop that marketing, especially during the wintertime.

One of the things you need to create are KPIs or key performance indicators. And once you have those key performance indicators up and running, you can determine whether things are working or not so much. Every night for instance, I know how many calls we took at the office and I know how many of those we scheduled.

Also, you must hone your sales process at the initial point of contact. And you actually have two initial points of contact. One is when you are walking in and out of the real estate offices trying to make sure they are willing to recommend and refer you to other people. The second initial sales process or initial point of contact is when you get the phone call. The question is how good are you at answering the phone?

The first thing you must do is Answer the Phone and then you must get the inspection scheduled. For starters, AATP—Always Answer the Phone! If you don't answer the phone they are calling the next person on the list. Then when you do have them on the call, you must make sure you are making the best of that opportunity to get them to say yes on that call. Ask yourself: what are you doing to get more folks to say yes, and even say yes to additional services?

Here is some good news for you about your competition and mine: most of the competition will stop their marketing, or significantly slow down their marketing, as we go into wintertime. This means the phone rings less. Of course they think it is because of winter. And I think that is just brilliant on their part. Because here is number two.

### **Winter Response #2**

I call this going to the amusement park when there is a chance of rain. I love amusement parks. I love taking my grandkids to amusement parks. I have season passes at Six Flags here locally and then every five years we get annual passes for Walt Disney World. When we go and there is a chance of rain we know it is going to be a great day at the park because most people will not go when there is a chance of rain. The same is true with most of your competitors during winter. They will abandon their marketing during the wintertime. They will either slow down or they will stop marketing all together. And they give me some of the most fabulous excuses for not marketing.

“Real estate agents aren’t doing as much business this time of year” or “Not as many of the agents are in the offices during November and December.” Both of these are true statements which they used as an excuse to say, “I don’t really think it is a good idea for me to be in the office and marketing as much during the wintertime.” I love my competition! Here is the thing: you actually need to be in real estate offices almost twice as often during the wintertime. If there are fewer people, if there are fewer jobs available out there, then you need to be working harder. When business is slower than normal we actually need to turn up our marketing, just like you turn up the heat when gets colder.

### **Winter Response #3**

One of the things I tell people is to create a marketing team. Talk to other companies that market to the same folks you do, whether it is real estate agents, mortgage or title companies, real estate attorneys, moving companies or insurance agencies. Join forces to market together toward your common client and make it a win/win situation. A lot of times we will team up with a mortgage, title or even a roofing company to market together. Visit [TopAgentMovie.com](http://TopAgentMovie.com) for an example.

### **Winter Response #4**

This is really important and is different from everything I have talked about up to this point. This is one thing you cannot do: you cannot sing the winter blues. You can’t go out and say: “Wow, guys you know, man, business sure has slacked off.” You can’t do it with the real estate agents or the mortgage or title company. You can’t do it with anybody. Winter response #5 Look at what revenue streams you are missing or that you are not taking advantage of right now. Now is a great time to add radon inspections or maybe even mold inspections or some other service that you haven’t done before. At least use this time to get the proper training to do these and other types of inspections once the regular season is back.

### **Winter Response #5**

Look at what revenue streams you are missing or that you are not taking advantage of right now. Now is a great time to add radon inspections or maybe even mold inspections or some other service that you haven’t done before. At least use this time to get the proper training to do these and other types of inspections once the regular season is back.

Also, look around. What other type of work is available in your industry that your competition is ignoring? Here are a couple of unusual examples. One of the things that people often ignore is

winterizing and dewinterizing. Now, I will tell you that I don't really want to do these. However, I don't want them to stop me from getting inspections either. Plus, if I do them, there can be extra money for doing it. Some of our members of the Mastermind Inspector Community, especially in really cold areas, are doing them and they are getting paid good money— from \$125 to \$250 to winterize the property.

### **Winter Response #6**

Go back to your customers, or as I call them, “mavens.” Do business with old customers instead of just leaving them and going on to the next. Call all of your top agents to tell them: “thank you.” This is important. This is actually something that we emphasize, especially as November hits. Again, tell all of the agents who have been working with you “thank you” and how much you appreciate them and what a great year it's been. You don't ask for business. You don't even have to ask for referrals. Just making those calls to top agents will help you get more referrals and give you an upswing in business as you go into November and December.

The bottom line is to make sure that you are out there because the people who are working during winter also appreciate other people who are working during winter to run and grow their businesses. They are there working hard, and they love it when they see you working hard as well. It makes them want to work with you.

So, what do we do as we get into the winter months? We do more marketing and we do it more consistently. In fact, the colder it gets, the more marketing you need to do. Your competition might be doing more marketing as well but I doubt it. Even if they are, it won't come close to what you can do.

#### **Here are a couple of quick items to help with your Winter Marketing Plan:**

- Plan five phone calls per day—just to say thanks for helping you have a great year.
- Send cards to all the agents who sent you business this year.
- Send a thank you card to all the managers who you did presentations for this year and want to do presentations for next year.
- Send out calendars to all your top agents.

The bottom line is that there are reasons our Mastermind Inspector Community out-paces the competition and why so many are having their best year ever, when so many other inspectors struggle. Just be careful not to fall into their trap of making excuses.

When you hang around the right people you will find they are working on solutions, not excuses. Be successful and be around those who are successful too.

#### ***About the Author***

Mike Crow is the founder of Mastermind Inspector Community and has personally performed 10,000+ inspections and built two 7-figure+ inspection businesses.

Get a FREE copy of Mike's book “Home Inspector Marketing Secrets” at [www.WREinspectors.com](http://www.WREinspectors.com).

# Insight The Coming Stucco- Pocalypse<sup>1</sup>

An edited version of this Insight first appeared in the ASHRAE Journal.

By Joseph W. Lstiburek, Ph.D., P.Eng., Fellow ASHRAE

How can you take a system with thousands of years of history and screw it up? Easy. Keep improving it until it does not work. Babylonians used it. Egyptians used it. Greeks used it. Romans used it (**Photograph 1**). Everyone used it...and everyone uses it. But it sure has changed and what we put it over sure has changed.



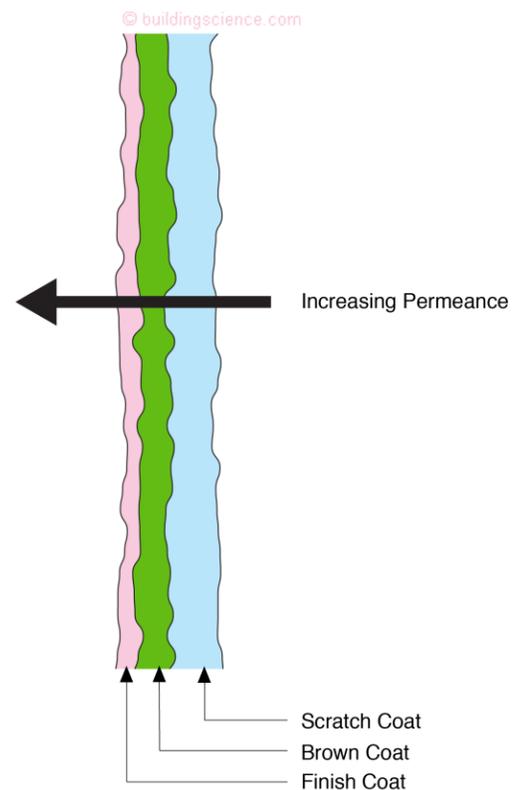
**Photograph 1: Pompeii – Stucco applied over Roman brick. Minor issue with Mount Vesuvius in 79 A.D.**

Over several millennia<sup>2</sup> stucco has gone from lime-based to lime-Portland cement based to Portland cement-based to polymer modified....and each step of the way it has gotten stronger...and less vapor permeable.

|                                   |                       |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Traditional lime based stucco     | Greater than 20 perms |
| Lime-Portland cement based stucco | 5 to 10 perms         |
| Portland cement based stucco      | 1 to 5 perms          |
| Polymer modified stucco           | Less than 1 perm      |

This has had huge consequences. Duh. When walls get wet they can't dry. They used to be able to. Today? Not so much.

Traditional lime based stucco was three layers: scratch coat, brown coat and finish coat (**Figure 1**). Each successive layer to the exterior was more vapor open than the layer it covered. Yup. Old timers had it dialed in. Today? Not so much.



<sup>1</sup> We were here before almost a decade ago (*"The Perfect Storm Over Stucco"*, ASHRAE Journal, February 2008)...more problems now...more worried now...  
November 2017

<sup>2</sup> "kiloyears" Yes, this is a valid term. Who knew?

**Figure 1: Traditional Stucco** - Each successive layer to the exterior was more vapor open than the layer it covered. Yup. Old timers had it dialed in. Today? Not so much.

Stucco historically had good compressive strength but not very good tensile strength. As we have manipulated the stucco “recipe” over the years, compressive strength has gotten better. And over the years so has tensile strength. To that end we have added cow dung, egg whites, pigs blood and finally polymers to the recipe. The “key” to the recipe is to create a strong “tinkertoy”<sup>3</sup> (**Figure 2**). The older stucco tinkertoys had larger “voids” than newer tinkertoys. Water molecules could move through the older stucco tinkertoys more easily than the newer tinkertoys. But all of the tinkertoys could be pulled apart pretty easily. So what to do? Ah, add another tinkertoy inside the voids of the original tinkertoy (**Figure 3**). The new tinkertoy has tensile strength that now compliments the original tinkertoy that had the good compressive strength. Good news. Except now the voids are much smaller because of this new tinkertoy taking up much of the space in the voids of the original tinkertoy. The water molecules don’t move so easily any more. Welcome to polymer modification.<sup>4</sup>

The new recipe does not always follow the old rules laid out in **Figure 1**. Sometimes the finish coat and brown coat are less permeable than the scratch coat depending on what is added and how much. Oops.<sup>5</sup>

We used to put the stucco over brick and stone. If things got wet so what? Nothing to rot. And the walls were not insulated. Lots of energy flow. Lots of energy available for drying. Lots of drying. Life was good. Then we started to put stucco over wood. Wood rots. But it does not rot unless you get it real wet for a long time. We didn’t get the wood real wet for a long time. And more importantly it was real wood. And we didn’t insulate the walls. Lots of drying available even if the real wood got real wet. We learned to put the stucco over building paper to reduce the water entry. Life was still good.

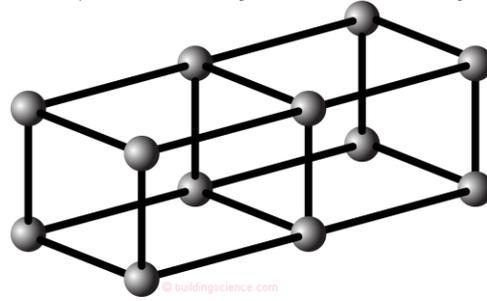
Then we did three things. We stopped using real wood. We insulated...a lot. And we stopped putting the stucco over building paper.

We went from woven branches<sup>6</sup> to board sheathing. Then from board sheathing to plywood. Then finally

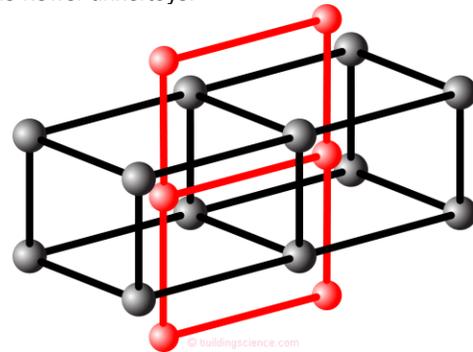
<sup>3</sup> Tinkertoys were invented in 1914 by Charles Pajeau to enable future engineers to understand materials science. Pajeau was a stonemason. It doesn’t get better than this....

<sup>4</sup> Apologies to real material scientists and chemical engineers for this over simplification of the real world.  
November 2017

from plywood to oriented strand board (OSB). We were here before (*“The Evolution of Walls”, ASHRAE Journal,*



**Figure 2: Stucco Tinkertoy** - The older stucco tinkertoys had larger “voids” than newer tinkertoys. Water molecules could move through the older stucco tinkertoys more easily than the newer tinkertoys.



**Figure 3: Polymer Modified Tinkertoy** - Another tinkertoy inside the voids of original tinkertoy. This new tinkertoy has tensile strength that now compliments the original tinkertoy that had the good compressive strength. Good news. Except now the voids are much smaller because of this new tinkertoy taking up much of the space in the voids of the original tinkertoy.

*June 2009*). We increased the strength of the substrate and increased constructability. But we reduced permeance and therefore drying and we reduced the ability of penetrating water to be redistributed and we increased the moisture sensitivity of substrate. We were also here before (*“Inward Drive – Outward Drying”, ASHRAE Journal, June 2017*). None of this was good.

We then insulated. And we insulated. And insulated some more. This reduced the ability of the assemblies to dry when they got wet. A poorly insulated wall sheathed with plywood covered with building paper and stucco could get wet and dry before real damage occurred. A well-insulated wall sheathed with OSB covered with

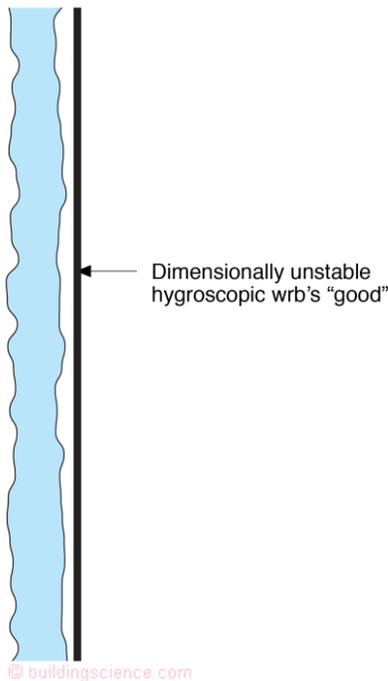
<sup>5</sup> Not good when you are on the coast of a big body of water with salt in it...salt solution gets in...phase change happens...salt gets left behind...osmosis...fun...blisters...bond failure...

<sup>6</sup> Wattle and daub

building paper and Portland cement based-stucco...not so much.

Could we make it worse? Yes, of course. We can improve building papers. We could make them dimensionally stable. When building papers (aka “water resistive barriers” wrb’s) were hygroscopic they expanded and contracted and stucco did not bond effectively to them (**Figure 4**). Manufacturers of building papers began to make them more hydrophobic and dimensionally stable. How could this be bad? We began to get the stucco bonding to building paper. When stucco bonds to building paper the building paper loses water repellency and its ability to drain (**Photograph 2**). Could we make it worse? Yes, of course. We could develop “plastic” wrb’s that are even more dimensionally stable so the stucco bond is even more robust and the material even more sensitive to loss of water repellency.

It all came together in Vancouver in the 1990’s and we almost rotted that great city to the ground. Low permeance stucco, high thermal resistance wall assemblies, OSB sheathing and dimensionally stable wrb’s.<sup>7</sup> You could tell you were in Vancouver based on the number of tarps and scaffolding covering the rotting buildings (**Photograph 3** and **Photograph 4**).



**Figure 4: Dimensionally Unstable Building Paper** - When building papers (aka “water resistive barriers” wrb’s) were

<sup>7</sup> Vancouver also had interior polyethylene vapor barriers that completely eliminated any interior drying. Made it worse. But even if there had been no poly the buildings were doomed....it just would have taken a little longer....  
November 2017

hygroscopic they expanded and contracted and stucco did not bond effectively to them.



**Photograph 2: Stucco Bonded to Building Paper** - When stucco bonds to building paper the building paper loses water repellency and its’ ability to drain.



**Photograph 3: Vancouver Condo** – Classic building design. Folks tried to blame the lack of overhangs...



**Photograph 4: Vancouver Tarp** - You could tell you were in Vancouver based on the number tarps and scaffolding covering the rotting buildings.

The images were dramatic...“crying” Vancouver stucco (**Photograph 5**)...stucco bonded to plastic wrb’s (**Photograph 6**)...and rotting OSB behind plastic wrb’s (**Photograph 7**). We should have paid attention. Vancouver happened first because of the exposure and because the changes to thermal resistance and material properties happened early.

Then things began to move south and east. First on the multistory wood frame buildings because the rain exposure increases with height (**Photograph 8**) then on regular wood frame low rise (**Photograph 9**).



**Photograph 5: More Vancouver** – “Crying” stucco.



**Photograph 6: Still More Vancouver** – Stucco bonded to plastic wrb.



**Photograph 7: Vancouver End Game** – Rotting OSB behind plastic wrb.



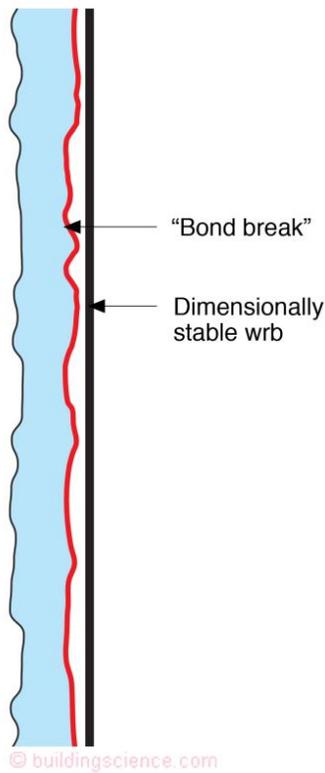
**Photograph 8: Multistory Wood Frame** - Things began to move south and east. First on the multistory wood frame buildings because the rain exposure increases with height.



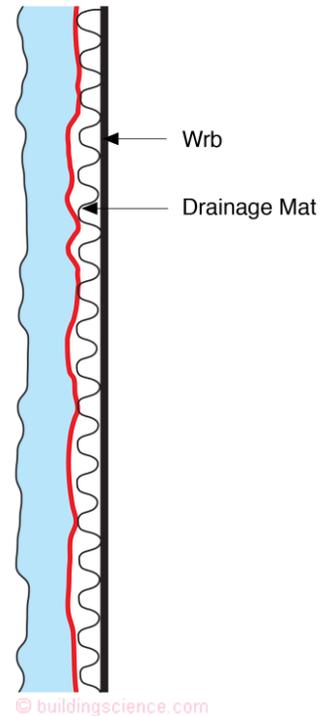
**Photograph 9: Wood Frame Low Rise** – Even though the exposure is less on low rise they are not immune.

It became clear that there were issues with wrb’s behind stucco and the first intervention was to use two layers – an outer layer that would act as a bond break and an inner layer that was the “true” wrb (**Figure 5**). Unfortunately this was not enough.

The assemblies needed enhanced drainage and enhanced drying. One of the more effective means of accomplishing both is to provide a drainage mat between the bond break and the wrb (**Figure 6**). We have learned this on the multistory wood frame buildings (**Photograph 10** and **Photograph 11**). We learned it on the multistory wood frame buildings first because they began to experience the problems first.



**Figure 5: Bond Break** - It became clear that there were issues with wrb’s and the first intervention was to use two layers – an outer layer that would act as a bond break and an inner layer that was the “true” wrb.



**Figure 6: Drainage and Drying Gap** - The assemblies needed enhanced drainage and enhanced drying. One of the more effective means of accomplishing both is to provide a drainage mat between the bond break and the wrb.



**Photograph 10: Multistory Wood Frame Done Right** - We learned to do it correctly on the multistory wood frame buildings first because they began to experience the problems first.



**Photograph 11: Drainage and Drying Gap** – Plastic wrap covered with a drainage mat with an integral bond break.

So what do we need to do? Easy. Provide a 3/8 inch air space behind stucco installed over OSB sheathing in regions where it rains more than 20 inches per year. That's it.

Things are getting worse. But things have to get intolerably bad before we change. We didn't learn from Vancouver. I predict that they are going to get intolerably bad sooner than later. The stucco-pocalypse is coming.

## References

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Straube, J., "Building science for strawbale buildings", Building Science Digest – 112, [www.buildingscience.com](http://www.buildingscience.com), 2009.

# In My Email

Today everybody and every organization wants your email address. We are added to what seems like tens of lists a week. Why? So that we can be made the target of someone's advertising. From the targets perspective ... so they can spam the heck out of us. As the CAHI editor, I have taken on great personal risk. I get information from a very large fraction of the internet. During my last physical, my doctor recommended that I cut back on the spam in my diet to relieve blood pressure issues.

When I find something that I feel might be helpful to a home inspector: I include it in our newsletter. However, this month I am including something that scared me as a home inspector and also as an American. This is from ASHI.



January 15, 2018

## Making the Future Better

*for ALL home inspectors nationwide*

What is InspectPAC? InspectPAC raises money to help elect and re-elect candidates to Congress who have an understanding of the home inspection profession, and who are supportive of the profession. Contribute with others who believe in a strong home inspection profession.



**DONATE NOW**

# JOIN US AT INSPECTPAC

## Monday, Jan. 22 @ 7PM



We're trying something a little different this year for InspectPAC. We're bringing in a lounge singer with piano accompaniment, to help us relax and unwind after a very busy day of classes and exhibit hall.

\$50 a ticket gains access to an open bar and hors d'oeuvres. There will be raffles and prizes to take part in.

Oh, and this glass on the left? \$20 gets you this special commemorative glass. Also, you can get one of 5 special drinks (unlimited) in the glass:

- 1) The Board of Director (Old Fashioned)
- 2) The Young Professional (Nor'easter)
- 3) InspectPAC o' Punch (Planters Punch)
- 4) The ASHItini (Dirty Martini)
- 5) The Capitol (Manhattan)

**DONATE NOW**

## LIVE MUSIC



After a long day in class, speaking with exhibitors, and generally being on your feet; after class ends at 6pm, go back to your respective rooms, splash water on your face, and then come join us at the InspectPAC fundraising event. We'll have a lounge singer and piano accompaniment to help you unwind and relax. Listen to the sultry singing, nosh on hors d'oeuvres, imbibe some drinks and donate, donate, donate!

**DONATE NOW**

## **CAN'T MAKE IT TO INSPECTIONWORLD?**



InspectPAC isn't just a fundraising event at InspectionWorld. ASHI makes sure to discuss the benefits of InspectPAC everywhere we go. For example, Mike Crow of Mastermind Inspector

Community makes it a point as part of his conference: 3 Days of Secrets Revealed, to raise funds for this cause. InspectPAC isn't just for ASHI members. It's for all home inspectors, whether you're a member of ASHI or not. So if you're unable to join us at InspectionWorld 2018 in Orlando, you can still donate to InspectPAC. Just click on any of the "Donate Now" buttons to help out.

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PACs scare me. From what I have read they appear to put the power to elect in the hands of the rich. They create another layer of self serving parties that get paid. They allow organizations to influence who is elected from areas that they are not located in or familiar with. Did the Russians operate a PAC in the last election? Why should Alabama get told not to elect an idiot? The people in Alabama figured it out for themselves. We should only try to influence those that represent us.

The Constitution lays out how our federal government will be organized and how/who will be chosen to serve. The term PAC is never found in the Constitution. Before election reform targets the electoral college we should get rid of PACs. Now back to Home Inspectors. The CAHI Board has never supported donating to a PAC. We have investigated helping to support a lobbyist in Hartford but felt it was not cost effective use of our funds. We have supported real estate groups that had matching interests in Hartford and we have felt that members contacting their state representatives could also be useful. Please contact Bill K, Woody, or any other board members if you here of any opportunity to shape the business environment here in CT.

## Emergency Department Visits Related to Flu the Highest in CT since 2009

### Many Local Health Departments to Hold Flu Shot Clinics on Saturday

The state Department of Public Health (DPH) today released the weekly 2017-2018 Influenza Season Update for the week ending on February 3rd. The full report is available on DPH's Influenza Surveillance and Statistics webpage. DPH also announced that several local health departments throughout the state will be holding low/no-cost flu vaccine clinics this Saturday. Please click [here](#) for the current schedule and locations of Saturday's flu clinics.

"With the peak of flu season potentially still weeks away, it is still not too late to get a flu shot. Several local health departments will be holding flu shot clinics this Saturday, and I strongly urge anyone who hasn't yet been vaccinated to visit one of the clinics in their area or call their healthcare practitioner in order to get vaccinated," said DPH Commissioner Dr. Pino.

According to this week's update, which tracks flu activity through February 3rd, flu activity in Connecticut remains high and widespread with an increasing number of patients presenting with flu symptoms, as well as increasing numbers of flu-associated hospitalizations and deaths. Statewide emergency department visits attributed to the flu have increased to 14.2%, which is the highest weekly level observed in Connecticut since the 2009 H1N1 pandemic.

A total of 1,360 patients have been hospitalized with confirmed cases of flu between August 27, 2017 and February 3, 2018. 63 deaths have been attributed to the flu (50 associated with flu A, 13 with flu B) so far this season. Of these deaths, 52 were among patients over the age of 65, 6 were 50-64 years of age, 3 were 25-49 years of age, 1 was between 19-24 years of age, and 1 was between 5-17 years of age. A total of 3,895 influenza positive laboratory tests have been reported so far this season.



## Q How should you detail the edge of a tile floor where it meets a carpet?

**A** Tom Meehan, co-author of *Working With Tile* (Taunton Press, 2011) and a second-generation tile installer from Harwich, Mass., responds: When I have a choice, I always opt to install tile before carpeting, for a number of reasons. First, I can install the tile on a straight line that is easy to bring the carpet up to. And because setting tile can be a messy job with mortar, water, and grout, tiling first keeps the mess away from the carpet. It's much easier to sweep carpet crumbs off tile than it is to clean mortar out of the pile of a carpet.

### TILING BEFORE CARPET

When the tile is to butt into carpet, I begin by drawing a straight line where I want the transition. I try to be mindful of exactly how and

where the transition line between the carpet and the tile will be located. In the project shown in the photos below, the hallway carpet was to tuck under existing baseboard on either side of a tiled entry. So I drew the guideline for the tile at the edge of the wall rather than at the edge of baseboard (1), using a straightedge and a water-proof black marker to make the line.

When setting the tile, I comb the mortar straight back from the line, and then set the tiles with their outermost edges against a straight-edge, in this case a 6-foot level (2). I make sure to scrape up any excess mortar or grout that oozes beyond the line. When the grout cures, the carpet layer can then position the tacking strip exactly where it needs to be to make an even transition between the two floors.

**Tile before carpet.**  
First establish the transition line between the carpet and the tile and draw a line (1). Spread mortar for the tile, pulling it away from the line. Then install the tile using a straightedge to keep the edge of the tiles in a perfectly straight line (2). Keep the edge of the tile free of excess mortar and grout.



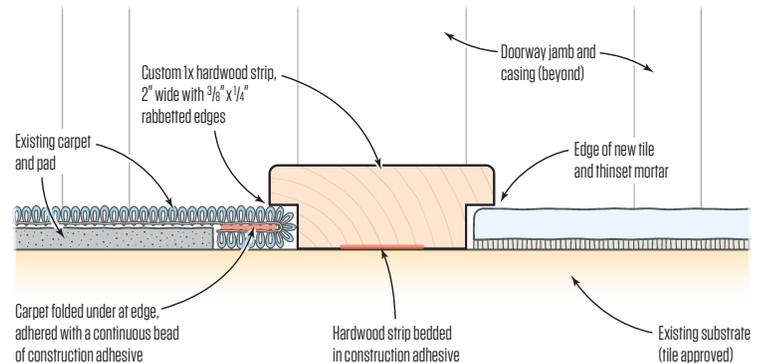
Photos by Roe Osborn; illustration by Tim Healey

### TILING TO EXISTING CARPET

If I need to tile up to carpet that has already been installed—at a doorway, for instance—I install the tile carefully to within about an inch of the carpet. Again, I'm careful not to get any mortar or grout on the carpet. To bridge the transition between the carpet and the tile, I fashion a T-shaped wooden strip that bridges the edge of the carpet and the edge of the tile (see illustration, right). I make the strip from 1-by oak that I rip to 2 inches wide. I rabbet the edges about  $\frac{3}{8}$  inch deep on each side, leaving  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch-wide wings on the top. I round over the top edges and give the strip a couple of quick coats of poly.

To install the strip, I first remove the tackless strip, if it is in the way, and I fold the carpet flap from the threshold under itself, leaving a gap of about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches between the tile and the carpet. Before folding the carpet, I apply a bead of construction adhesive to the underside of the flap so that the carpet will adhere to itself. After making the fold, I sharpen the crease by going over it with a hammer. Then it's just a matter of applying construction adhesive to the strip and pressing it into place, overlapping the edges of both the tile and the carpet. I usually put weight on the strip to hold it in place while the adhesive cures—overnight, if possible.

Custom Transition Strip Where Tile Meets Carpet



**Tile-to-carpet transition.** When tiling to an existing carpeted floor, install the tile to within about an inch of the carpet. Fold the flap of carpet under itself, using construction adhesive to keep the flap from unfolding. Then install a wooden transition strip to bridge between the two floors. Screws with plugged holes can be used to secure the strip, but the author has had success using just construction adhesive.

# STAIRS



## Squeak-Free, Site-Built Stairs

You can deliver superb quality and still work efficiently

BY TIM UHLER

One of my first jobs in construction was screwing down the floors right before finishes went in. I was taught to especially pay attention to high-traffic areas like stairs. Squeaks can damage a builder's reputation, and one of the most common places for squeaks are stairs.

Over the years, I've tried different methods to speed up stair building without increasing the likelihood of squeaks. We now have a good method for site-built stairs that is easy to follow and doesn't add a lot of expense. In this article, I won't go into too much detail about layout and code, which *JLC* has covered in the past, but will focus instead on the actual construction of squeak-free, durable stairs.

### SELECTING MATERIALS

I use #2 or better 2x12 Doug fir for the stringers. I've tried both Louisiana Pacific's 1 1/4-inch LSL and Weyerhaeuser 1 1/4-inch Timberstrand LSL stringers, and while I love both products for their consistency, I prefer to use 2x12. The reason is that both LSL products are so dense that when I nail risers, the nail will often curl and blow-out. That has happened often enough that I now stick to a higher-grade 2x12.

I was taught to use 1x8 pine for risers and while that works well, I now frame stairs out of 2x8 Doug fir risers and Norbord SteadiTred 1-inch OSB bullnose 1 1/2-inch-deep treads. The reason

Photos by Tim Uhler and Kyle Davis

## SQUEAK-FREE, SITE-BUILT STAIRS



**Cutting stringers.** The most important thing to remember is that all the stringers must be identical. The author lays out the first stringer with a rise and run block (1), then cuts each step with a circular saw (2). He is careful not to overcut, finishing each step with a jigsaw (3). To keep stringers consistent, he uses the first stringer to lay out the second (4) ... and (not shown) the third.

for the 2x8 risers is that they allow me to nail through the tread into the riser for a good connection without splitting out.

Many people rip down subfloor material for their risers. This doesn't allow fastening from the tread, so I avoid doing this. It also takes more time to rip them down, even using a track saw.

**Fasteners.** I like to use 2½-by-.131-inch ring-shank coil nails to nail down the treads and 3-by-.131-inch hot-dipped (HD) galvanized nails for the risers. The HD nails hold well for the risers and the larger-shank 8s hold well for the treads.

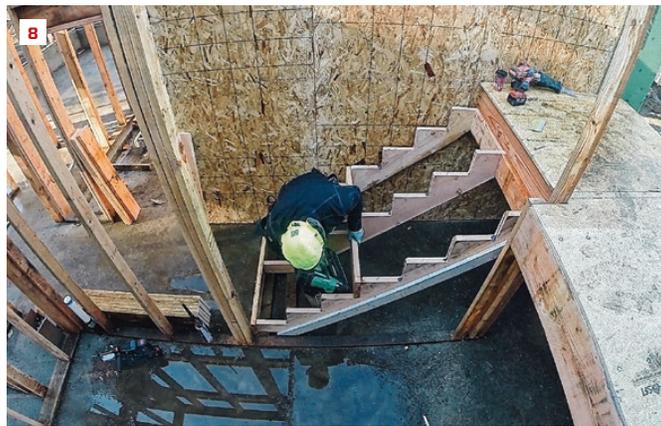
**Glue.** One of the “make-it-or-break-it” details in stair building is the glue. This is not an area to try to lower expenses.

I use, and love, PL Premium polyurethane. When it is cold outside, I keep the tubes in a Caulk Warmer (arcticwarmers.com) bag. What makes PL such a great glue is that it sticks extremely well. I have needed to tear up subfloor or tread material before,

and the material came apart before the glue joint did. It can cost twice what a standard subfloor adhesive costs but is well worth the extra expense.

Over the last six months or so, we've been using Advantech Subfloor Adhesive. This is a foam-to-gel product that dispenses from a standard foam gun. I became a believer in this glue after an accident. Some spilled on a piece of sheathing, and then a block of wood landed on the glue and stayed there overnight. It wasn't clamped or nailed in any way. When we tried to pull them apart the next morning, the sheathing pulled apart instead of the glue. The result is similar to the PL; Advantech may even be a little more aggressive.

One note on both of these glues: They will stain your skin, so I recommend wearing gloves. Despite my best efforts, though, it seems that some always ends up on my hands.



**Wall finish.** If the walls are drywall only, a 1-by nailed to the stringer provides space for the drywall to slide in (5). If a finish skirt will be added, the author nails on a 2-by (6). **Risers.** Two-by risers provide nailing for each tread. The author starts by applying adhesive to the stringer edges (7), nails on a riser at the bottom and midspan (8), then nails on the remaining risers (9).

## BUILDING PROCESS

If the stairway has a landing, I build that first, always using 2x12s. A stair landing sees a lot of traffic and it should feel stiff. My preference is to bring the edge of the landing to the heel of the stair stringer, so I will cut one stringer for this, but I wait until the landing is framed and sheathed before cutting the rest of the stringers.

**Attachment at the head.** Instead of using joist hangers, I like to use full-height pressure blocks between the stringers. They provide more area for glue and for nailing for the top tread and for drywall on the underside. Pressure blocks allow me to use up all my scrap and are faster to install than joist hangers. This method also helps us minimize the number of tools we have out, since we have gotten in the habit of installing hangers with a positive-placement gun.

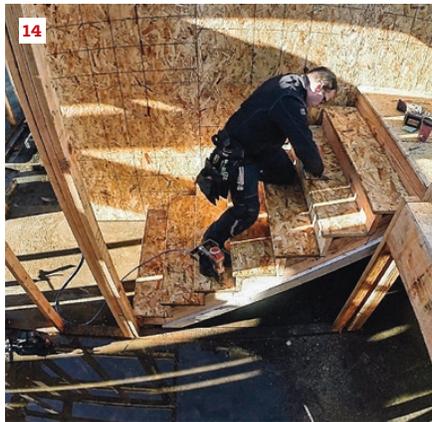
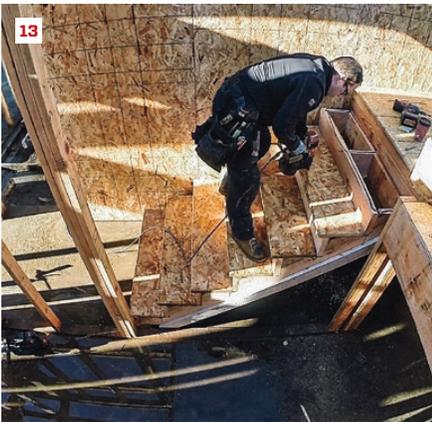
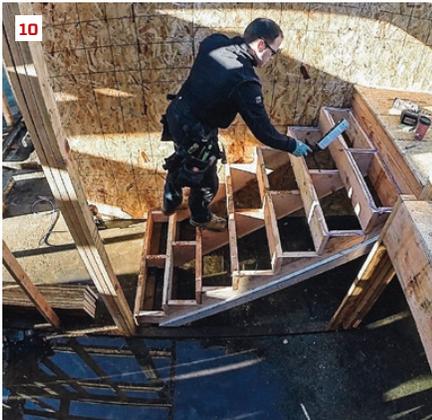
**Stringers.** If the width of the stairway is 48 inches or less, I cut

three stringers. Even at 24 inches on-center, the stringers feel strong because each 2x8 riser, glued and nailed in place, acts like a joist.

If the stairs have skirting, I nail a 2x4 to the stringer to space it off the wall. This allows the drywall crew to apply their board, and then the finish carpenter to slip a finish skirt between the stringer and the wall framing. If no skirt is planned, a 1-by is sufficient to allow space for drywall to slip beside the stringers.

To prevent squeaks, it is important to view a set of stairs as one solid unit. I use the first stringer I cut as a pattern for the other two in that flight. Any discrepancy in size or angle will cause each stringer to act on its own and slowly loosen the parts over time. To keep the stringers as strong as possible, don't over-notch the material. Cut right to the lines and finish the cut with a jigsaw. Cut all treads and risers and have them stacked nearby before assembling the stair.

## SQUEAK-FREE, SITE-BUILT STAIRS



**Treads.** For tread stock, the author uses Norbord's SteadiTred OSB for consistency and durability. Here, he begins with a foam-to-gel adhesive on the stringers (10). He also applies adhesive to the edge of the tread that butts the riser above it (11) before he nails the tread off to the stringers (12), beginning at the bottom and working his way up (13). The riser-to-tread connection needs to be precise and strong, as it is the most likely place for a stair to squeak. After securing the treads in place, he is careful to mark the overhang (14) before he works his way back down the stairs, nailing off each tread to each riser (15).

**Assembly.** Fasten the stringers to any walls with LedgerLok screws. This will keep them from pulling away from the wall when the wood shrinks, as it inevitably will. I don't notch in a cleat at the bottom of the stringers, because I've bolted them to the walls with LedgerLok structural screws. Pressure-block the stringers at the top to keep them locked in place and to provide nailing for the last tread.

**Order of assembly.** I first apply glue to all the riser cuts on the stringers. I install the bottom riser, and then install a middle riser to lock in the stringers' spacing before installing the rest. For treads, I first apply glue to all the tread cuts on the stringers and then to the back of all tread material, as shown in the sequence above.

Starting at the bottom of the stair, I nail all the treads to the stringers, working my way up. Then I mark the overhang on the tread and work my way down, nailing the tread to the riser. This

spot is where we've most commonly had squeaks over the years; as a result, I stopped using 1-by riser material and began using 2-by. Often, the 1-by would crack over time. The 2-by riser stock allows for a better connection, and because it is stronger, it's less likely to crack.

If I have to rip down the tread material, I use a track saw to make it perfect. The glue on the back of the tread where it meets the riser material provides a tight connection, and when the glue dries, it forms a squeak-free connection.

For a typical 16-riser stairway (common to 9-foot-1-inch ceiling heights in my area) with a landing platform, I can lay out and frame a rough stair in less than three hours, but I always estimate for three.

*Tim Uhler is a lead carpenter for Pioneer Builders in Port Orchard, Wash. Follow him on Instagram @awesomeframers.*

# Editor's Rant;

I would like this article from the American Legion with link so our readers can listen to this bastard.

<http://www.burnpit.us/2018/01/california-town-councilman-and-high-school-teacher-gregory-salcido-service-members-%E2%80%9Cdumb-%E2%80%99s>

It has been a long time since the 1960 and 70s when some Americans ridiculed our Service Members. I can remember being spit at and called a “Baby Killer” as I walked from the NY Port Authority to the train station while on leave and going to visit my parents. Many of those disillusioned by Viet Nam took it out on our Soldiers, Marines, Sailors and Airmen.

In the new millennium, we treat our service men and women a hell of a lot better. Thank God. But then something like this blows up. I applaud the American Legion for publicizing this incident. Please read the article and listen to the tape of this terrible behavior caught by a high school student. The ACLU will probably try to suppress the tape as illegally taken. I think Salcido should be sent to an ISIS camp so he can be hunted down and killed by our ignorant military.

**California Town Councilman and high school teacher Gregory Salcido on service members: “dumb \$#!\*’s, not high level thinkers”**

January 29th, 2018 by MOTHAX



Well, I saw this little gem on Saturday morning, and could barely wait to come in this morning and introduce the readers to Gregory Salcido. Mr. Salcido is a history teacher at El Rancho High and a city councilman in Pico Rivera, in sunny southern California. Let me start with a warm language warning here, and a mighty trigger warning, because not only does he like to use profanity in teaching his classes, he has some rather.....well, unorthodox beliefs about the men and women currently fighting overseas.

He comes right out of the gate on this video with the quote to end all quotes:

*We have a bunch of dumb shits over there. [Our service members in Iraq and Afghanistan.] Think about the people that you know over there, your fricken stupid uncle Louie, or whatever, they're dumb shits. They're not like high level thinkers, they're not academic people, they're not intellectual people. They're the fricken lowest of our low."*

So yeah, before I even address that little bit of ugliness, let me start with the news report, and then the actual video, which honestly has to be seen (or in this case listened to) to be believed. From the San Gabriel Valley Times:

*Three videos on social media of Pico Rivera Councilman Gregory Salcido, a teacher at El Rancho High School, making disparaging remarks about the military and berating a student for wearing a sweatshirt with a Marines logo have gone viral and created a backlash.*

*El Rancho Unified School District officials confirmed Saturday, Jan. 27 that the person speaking is Salcido and that the incident took place on school grounds.*

*"We acknowledge it is his voice based on the research of the incident so far and knowing it came from one of our classrooms," district Superintendent Karling Aguilera-Fort said in a phone interview.*

*"We have reached out to Mr. Salcido but have not been able to talk to him because he is out of town," Aguilera-Fort said.*

A subsequent Facebook post by Mr. Salcido came in from New York, where he was evidently attending a musical with his family, wherein he defended himself on the grounds that "I don't think it's wise for me to make any specific comments, but I want my friends, family, and students to know we are fine and we respect the rights of free expression for all individuals."

Ah, yes, the First Amendment Defense. Unfortunately, you're not really doing it right.

Here's the video (again, slight language warning):

OK, let's start with the uneducated bunch of incompetent boobs line of reasoning championed by Mr. Salcido in his supposed rant furthering the cause of the first amendment. According to "Face The Facts", a project of George Washington University:

*As a whole, the U.S. military is far better educated than the American population it defends. 82.8 percent of U.S. military officers in 2010 had at least a bachelor's degree, compared to 29.9 percent of the general population. 93.6 percent of enlisted soldiers had at least a high school diploma, compared to 59.5 percent of America.*

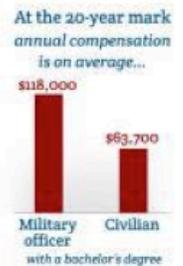
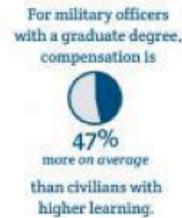
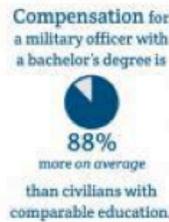
OK, so maybe they have a higher education level, but they don't succeed outside the military, right?

Yeah, not so much, as this Business Insider article profiled 15 Top 500 CEOs who got their start in the military:

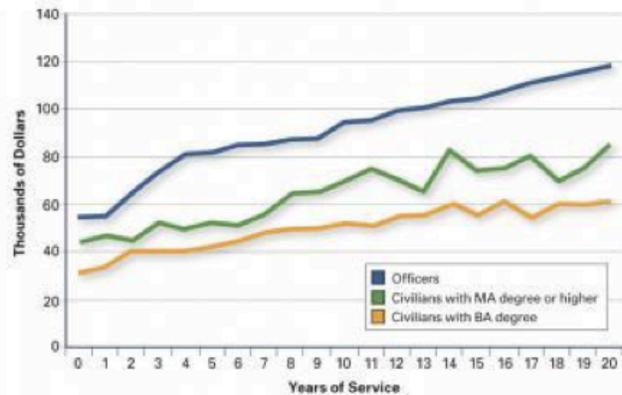
*Few institutions teach discipline, management, logistics, and efficiency like the US Armed Forces, so it's no surprise that Ranker's list of Fortune 500 CEOs finds many military veterans.*

These are the Chief Executive Officers of companies you might have heard of, like Johnson and Johnson, Proctor and Gamble, Casey's General Store, Walgreens, Viacom, General Motors, Verizon, Foot Locker and Fed Ex.

So, he's wrong on education level and wrong on success in the outside world. Empirically wrong. But most of us knew that anecdotally. When my unit deployed to Afghanistan, I was in my second year of law school and I volunteered to go. Not because I had no options, I wanted to serve. My best friend was also enlisted as an E5 Sergeant, despite his having a Master's Degree in National Security Studies from Georgetown and working full time at the highest levels of the Pentagon. A guy I served as an infantryman with in Bosnia was an Air Traffic Controller in civilian life. I knew other enlisted guys who were lawyers, nurses, school administrators and business leaders. One of my fellow squad leaders was pursuing a masters in History at Carnegie Mellon. Maybe my unit was out of the ordinary, but not according to the numbers that GWU has shown above. Perhaps Mr. Salcido is looking at a different study, but I'd love to see it.



Officer Regular Military Compensation vs. Civilian Earnings - 2009



**The DEPARTMENT of DEFENSE** offers college tuition assistance to soldiers up to a maximum of \$4,500 a year.

Since the military draft was eliminated after the Vietnam war, the Pentagon has sought a better-educated, better-compensated volunteer force. In fiscal 2012, the military's payroll was **\$107 billion** - a fifth of the Pentagon budget.

Meanwhile, before he shut his Facebook down to outside comments, it had already amassed 508 comments, ranging from very angry, to defending the teacher, to snark at the situation he finds himself in now.

One comment was noted in the San Gabriel Valley Times that should probably have made me mad (and evidently did make others mad) but just made me giggle:

*“This teacher is saying something every parent needs to hear!” wrote someone named Omar Grubbs. “Because no parent should want their kid joining the military. There is so much more in life than signing up to slave away for a country that taxes the poor and not the rich.”*

That comment right there has so much wrong with it I’m not even sure where to start. I have a 2.5 year old daughter, and I dream of her being accepted into the Air Force Academy someday. To do that, she’ll have to excel all along the way, but that is my dream for her. I have 5 month old twin boys, and I dream someday that they’ll follow Dad into the Army. Maybe as infantrymen. One looks like a ranger already, and the other looks like he could be a sniper. A bit hard to tell at that age. But if they come to me and say they’d rather go into music, theater, or (God forbid) politics or the Peace Corps, I would be no less or more proud of them. The military was a great way of life for me. I wasn’t a “slave” to a country of people run by some oligarchy; I wasn’t drafted; I went willingly. As did every single other person I served with.

They say that the Infantry is the lowest of what Mr. Salcido claims is a subset which is already the “lowest of the low.” Which I guess makes us Grunts the “lowest of the lowest of the low.” Ok tough guy. Here’s a list of the Skill Level 1 tasks for an infantryman, which include: first aid, communications, orient a map to the ground by map-terrain association, detect chemical agents, use of night vision devices, search a detainee.....it goes on for 9 pages of tasks.

I have nothing against all other occupations, but a history teacher is supposed to remember things from history, and then pass them along. Our \*list\* of tasks, to be level 1 is 9 pages long. If it is so easy, then I would challenge Mr. Salcido to read those tasks, and then see how he can do against a random serviceman or woman on the Expert Infantry Badge Qualification. We’ll see who the “dumb \$#!^’s” are then.

As for his First Amendment defense, I’m not going to even bother going into detail on that one. He didn’t figure out that teachers can’t just say or do whatever they want the first two times apparently:

*In May 2012, he was put on paid administrative leave after the Sheriff’s Department received a complaint that he struck a student.*

*In July 2010, a parent complained that Salcido had threatened his daughter, made inappropriate comments to his summer school class about race and insulted other students and parents, which Salcido denied.*

*He was suspended until the following fall’s first day of class.*

The over-use of the free speech defense is startling to me. Apparently some people think it is some sort of panacea or magic wand with which one can extricate oneself from problems by just crying it out loud: “rights of free expression for all individuals” and voila! all the problems are gone.

The First Amendment has limitations, defamation and libel being two obvious ones, but swearing in a classroom with minors, insulting large groups of people in the US and citing “facts” that are most charitably debatable doesn’t automatically get overridden because you say it is protected. Using that logic, there are any number of things that people would tell their boss on any given day, and then inform the employer that they couldn’t be fired because of the First Amendment.

If you are dumb enough to believe that, you get everything you deserve. As far as being a councilman (and even former mayor), well, that’s up to the fine people of Pico Rivera, California to decide. That’s the beauty of living in a representative democracy, vice a slave state envisioned by the Omar Grubbs’ of the world.

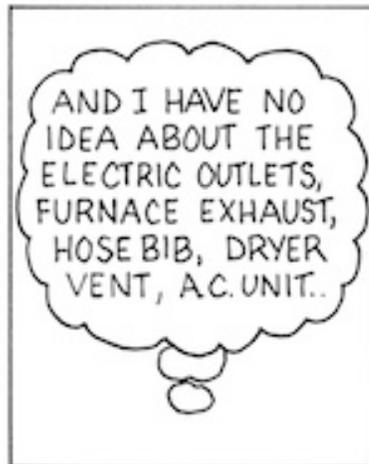
# Cartoons

HOMEY SPECTOR



Ted Glover

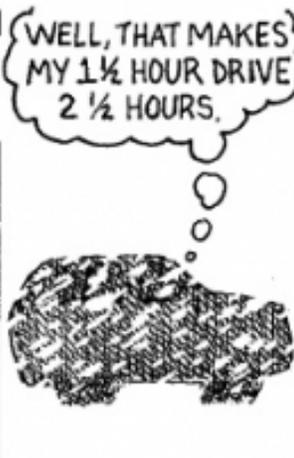
HOMEY SPECTOR



TED GLOVER



HOMEY SPECTOR



TED GLOVER

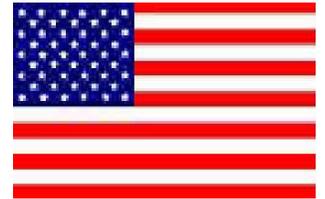


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