RUNKLE CONSULTING, INC.

From The Castle

Runkle Consulting, Inc.

Volume 4, Issue 4

August 2004

Expanded Format

I've been rather surprised by the reception this newsletter has gotten. I get loads of corporate propaganda junk mail every week. Companies seem to love "newsletters" that are full of junk about how great they are. When I started writing this newsletter, I wanted to stay away from that. Rather that blather on about Runkle Consulting and how we are so great, I wanted to write articles of interest to you. So, we've kept to that format, writing about issues of importance to builders, contractors, home inspectors, and home owners. From the feedback we've gotten, that's the right formula.

So, because of the positive reaction, we've decided to expand this newsletter to four pages. We'll concentrate on issues that we feel can help you, and let our company speak for itself.

Our goal in this newsletter is to stay on topics of interest to you, such as good construction, repairs, and maintenance

Deck Construction Safety

I have recurring nightmares about decks. If a house has structural problems, the overall structure tends to keep it from collapsing. There is so much redundancy in a house that you can do a lot of things wrong and it will remain standing. Decks aren't that way. There is no structural redundancy, and making things worse, they tend to be very high up off the ground, often overlooking a view (meaning they are hanging over a steep hill). They can fail in many ways, and often they get heavier loads than a floor in your home.

We have to look at two areas of concern in a deck. First, how is it attached to the house? The Code requires the use of through bolts, not lag bolts to prevent it from pulling away. Also, where the deck sets on the posts can be a problem. It should be either slotted in the posts, or held on with brackets. You don't want the posts kicking out from the deck.

A deck will be very wobbly if it is just setting on top of posts with no cross bracing. At the minimum, nail 1 x 6's cross wise under the deck to make it more stable. Tall deck posts (generally over 10' high) should have some sort of cross bracing to keep them from wobbling.

Also, I recommend using steel columns for deck posts over 10' high because treated yellow pine warps, and if your posts warp it can make the deck less stable.

Foundations for decks should be built the same as ones for the house. Be careful of foundations into steep slopes, you don't want them sliding down the hill. On steep slopes I recommend digging pier foundations.

Be careful about the railings. They should be securely attached, and not wobbly. Handrails must be 34" to 38" high and have guards that won't let a sphere larger than 4" pass through (this is to prevent a child's head from being caught).

Don't look for the "great deal" in deck construction. I don't care if your brother-in-law from your previous marriage can build a deck for you for cost, get a reliable contractor. Finally, get a permit so the deck will be inspected by someone that has no financial interest in its construction.

Inside this issue:

Special points of interest:

- Lawsuits
- Home Inspectors
- Illegal Toilets

Lawsuits, From Bad To Worse

Maybe it's fun for the judge, but for most people, lawsuits are not a pleasant experience.

"The law only cares about what's legal, several years later after starting the lawsuit, I was back where I started, but about $10,000 poorer. "

Unfortunately, we are in a rather litigious society. In some ways it may be better that is the case, we don't settle our disputes in duels or gunfights anymore for the most part. However, lawsuits are very expensive and emotionally draining. I've been an expert witness in a number of lawsuits and also been a plaintiff in one suit. From these experiences, I have made a few observations that may be helpful. First, I've noticed lawsuits can be broken down into one of three types (some are a mixture):

1. I'll Get You—this is the lawsuit that is for revenge. Instead of picking a fight with the person like you would in grade school, you take him or her to court.
2. I Want Money—there are people who actually make a living this way, coming up with nuisance suits and basically extorting money off the hapless defendant. I suspect most of these crash and burn and are generally more annoying than dangerous.
3. I Have No Choice—This is the case when somebody owes you a lot of money but won't pay it, or you buy a house and it breaks in half and the builder won't fix it.

Going through these one by one, these are my observations. Case #1, I'll Get You: My one lawsuit I brought was one of these. It was over an inheritance against a relative. I was right, 100% right. The suit cost me thousands of dollars, but I was only right from a moral standpoint. The law only cares about what's legal, several years later after starting the lawsuit, I was back where I started, but about $10,000 poorer. I see these lawsuits brought about for construction defects because the builder won't fix them, and the homeowner usually spends more than the cost of fixing the defect in legal fees. A lot of times the homeowner may feel he or she is wronged, but in reality may have no legal standing. The money is spent for legal fees, time is wasted, and nothing is resolved.

Type #2, I Want Money– These are lawsuits brought by people that think they are the next old lady burnt by a hot cup of coffee and awarded millions of dollars. I get people calling me wanting an expert witness all the time. One time I got hit with a claim that was of this type, it's funny now, but wasn't at the time. The fact is, insurance companies don't like to hand out money. If you bring a lawsuit expecting to get rich, expect a big legal fight., and I suspect in most cases you will lose, wasting time and being thousands of dollars poorer. If you need extra money, get a part time job at night at Home Depot or Wal-Mart. It's a sure thing for making money, plus you get a discount.

Type #3, I Have No Choice—This is the one that is to be dreaded. For whatever reason, you get stuck in a situation that if you don't bring a lawsuit, you could be stuck losing a lot of money. In such case, you want to be sure you have a good chance of winning, otherwise you could find yourself hurting even more. Many times these types of suits end up settled without going to court or arbitration because no one wants to risk a really adverse decision by the arbitrator or jury. If you have to go with this type of suit, find a good attorney, and make sure you've got the best experts on your side.

In my opinion, it's best to avoid lawsuits because of the expense and the time that they can take up.

Good Home Inspectors

A good home inspector is a member of ASHI or GAHI

I've seen a lot of home inspectors, and I've made some observations about the good ones:

1. They are members of members of the American Society of Home Inspectors and keep up their accreditations with the International Code Council.
2. They write detailed, factual reports that reference the paragraph in the Code for any defects they find.
3. They include photos in their reports to illustrate the points that they are making.
4. They are very observant, and pay strict attention to detail in every area of the house.
5. They have a broad base of knowledge, which allows them to spot defects and determine which ones might be of concern.
6. They don't exaggerate problems to scare or impress the buyer.
7. They keep their reports professional, avoiding snide comments about the builder, subcontractors, or engineer.
8. They don't come up with problems where none exist.
9. They bring forward the serious problems.

From The Castle

Runkle Consulting, Inc.

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Off To Iraq

This past month has been rather interesting. The biggest item is that the 48th Brigade, Georgia Army National Guard, has deployed over here. As of this writing, they are now up in Iraq. Among them is my son, SGT George W. Runkle IV—who is a Bradley Fighting Vehicle Gunner. I visited with my son when he passed through Kuwait on his way up north. He'll be in Baghdad for at least the first few months of his deployment. I probably won't see him until his mid-tour leave, and then when he comes home next year. We have contacted each other by e-mail already.

The 48th has been training since December, and from what my son tells me I think his deployment in Iraq will physically be easier than the training. Unfortunately, the danger up there is extreme, and no amount of training can completely prepare you for that.

In this past month I also went up to Iraq, to Balad Air Base, which is about 70 miles north of Baghdad. I didn't see anything of the country itself, except what I could see outside the wire, and from the airplane. At least around Balad the country is very green, the base is located near the Tigris River. It appears that the soil is very fertile there too, just looking at the plants growing. It's a great contrast to the extreme desert environment in Kuwait.

My son told me that where he's been so far is extremely poor. He's been amazed that he's seen people walking in the heat, far from any houses and they aren't carrying any water with them. For those of us not used to this environment, it's an invitation to heat stroke to go anywhere without water around here. He said he saw children playing far from anything in the heat, but they tended to get thrown different treats from the American soldiers passing by. That's not too much different from any other war in any other country. My grandmother used to get punished in WWI by her mother in Ireland for accepting things passed on to her by the Americans. Of course, she was a pretty teenage girl and there were other matters to consider…

As for myself, I'm going back up to Balad Air Base, I expect to be in Iraq for a number of weeks, I was requested to help out with a design project up there.

My son and I share a moment in front of his Bradley Fighting Vehicle before he headed up to Iraq.

Flying Into Iraq

Flying into and out of a combat zone is one of life's experiences that can't be easily duplicated. First, as the plane gets ready to begin its descent, you put on your helmet and body armor. Hopefully, if the plane gets shot, the body armor and helmet will keep you from being killed. Then the plane begins a near vertical descent to present the smallest target possible. It flattens out suddenly, and hits the runway fast. Inside, you can't feel too much of what the plane is doing because of the inertia, but when you go through it the first time it feels like the plane will crash.

Taking off is more frightening to me. The plane will go up in a tight spiral, again to present as small of a target as possible. It does a steep banking turn, which causes it to lose altitude—the plane falls sideways. As soon as the turn is complete, it starts a steep ascent, and then does another steep banked turn (falling sideways again—in a banked turn a plane has no lift). The whole experience is nerve wracking to me, because I visualize some guy with an SA-7 trying to squeeze off a shot at us before we hit altitude. It seems to take forever to get to altitude, at which point I breathe a sigh of relief.

Leapin' Lizards!

You would not believe the size of the lizards over here. I first saw them as road kill, squished monster lizards are as common as flat armadillos in south Georgia when you drive down the road. These lizards apparently are all over the place, they aren't poisonous, but they do have a nasty bite. They also have a spiked tail, which makes them hard to hold. It looks like they could bite like a snapping turtle, but I'm not going to test that theory.

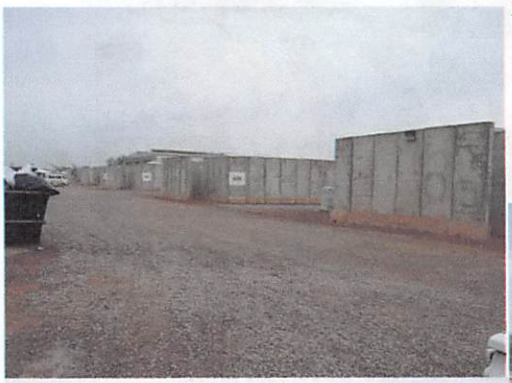
We were getting set to grade part of the camp here, and it came time to relocate the lizards. They set snares at all their holes with parachute cord, and chased the things in. The snares caught the lizards, and they were carried off to their new home elsewhere in the camp. Supposedly there is a really big lizard living in one of the motor pools, and the guys have adopted it as their mascot. They leave him food, and he's almost tame.

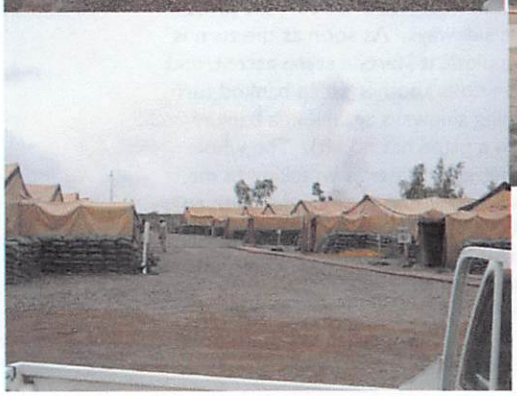
This picture is of me with a lizard that was caught on a construction site. There was some discussion about barbequing this little fellow, I was told their tails are a real delicacy. I suppose so, I've had alligator and it was pretty good. That wasn't my idea for the poor guy. I wanted to keep him as a pet in our tent. Problem is:

1. It's against regulations to keep pets here.
2. My tent mates didn't want a miniature dragon running around our tent at night biting their toes.

So, that ended that idea. The guy standing behind me in the picture gave the lizard a ride to a remote area of the camp and let him go. I just wonder, what in the heck can a lizard this big find to eat out in all this sand?

A Very Angry Lizard Poses For The Camera





Scenes From Balad Air Base in Iraq

To DR. WILLS

From The Castle

Print Edition—see a more in-depth edition on line at www.runkleconsulting.com under "News"

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It's Over

My retirement ceremony from the Air Force Reserves was on November 5, and the "official" date of my release is November 30, 2005. That caps 27 years of military service, first in the active Army, then the Army National Guard, on to the Air National Guard, and finally the Air Force Reserves. I have been to 23 countries, and deployed to the Mideast 4 times. It was an interesting career, and I'm glad to have served. I now transfer to the Retired Reserve, and will be there until age 60, when I finally draw my pension. While I enjoyed my time in the military reserves, it was getting difficult to run a business around repeated mobilizations, drill weekends, and the training required. My "moment" of decision came in Kuwait. I was eating breakfast, and I realized the breakfast I was eating was the same as the breakfasts I'd eaten in Iraq. The dining hall looked the same. I then realized the food and dining hall were the same as what I'd experienced in Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, and Abu Dhabi. My thought? "This is getting old." I sent in my retirement paperwork that afternoon.

George

Look At Us On TV!

We were contacted by Clark Howard's producer a few weeks ago and asked if we would like to comment on home construction in Atlanta. Clark felt that many homes are being built on land that shouldn't be built on. Since we do a lot of failure work, we were glad to appear. We were on WSB-TV 5 o'clock News on November 10 and 11.

We were assured that as long as we weren't pushing extended warranties, we were safe from Clark's wrath, so I felt comfortable with that. My first experience with an extended warranty by the way was on a $225 color TV my wife and I bought at Sears when we were first married. Sears tried to sell us a $150 warranty a year later, and the lady on the phone got mad at me when I laughed at her. Well, I'm digressing.

Clark's producer, Laura Reed, interviewed me. It was a pretty good interview, and I think Clark was quite fair in his show. We talked about bad lots, and I mentioned that the value of land is causing a lot of difficult lots to be developed. I mentioned that it can cost $30,000 to $40,000 more for foundations on difficult lots. Be careful about lots near creeks and on steep slopes. Clark emphasized that you need an engineer to look at the house if you are buying on these types of lots (I always thought Clark was a great guy!).

Unfortunately, TV spots are very short and can't go into depth about stuff. One of the items I was quoted on was retaining walls. I mentioned that only segmented block and concrete walls will last the life of the house, and that timber walls are only good for 10 to 20 years.

With timber walls, you have two different types. The creosote treated timbers, and pressure treated pine. Creosote ties are not going to last very long, about 10 years or so. Worse, many wall contractors will put up used railroad ties—these have been taken out of service by the railroads for being unusable, and now they get up for a retaining wall.

I'm not against creosote ties, my parents put them in our backyard to landscape it. Since the people that bought the house wanted to change the backyard landscaping anyway, that was fine for a service life. These type of walls are perfectly suited for landscaping that you know wont be permanent.

My wife says a few words at my retirement ceremony.

The treated yellow pine walls last about 20 years or longer. They are fine for more permanent installations. However, they don't last forever and when you put one of these walls up, just like the creosote tie walls, think about what it will be like to take it down.

What scares me is I am seeing houses built on fill held back by these walls, and very steep slopes in subdivisions held back

(Continued on page 2)

Clark (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

the same way. When the walls rot out, how can they be replaced if they are holding up a house? If the wall is holding up a steep slope, will it be replaced before it rots to the point it blows out with all that load?

In many neighborhoods built with these walls in the wrong places, I'm willing to bet we'll see people sell their houses cheap rather than spend the money to rebuild the walls. The neighborhoods will continue to degrade, and we'll see some serious urban blight in those areas. I think we are going to have some serious problems in about 20 years or less in some of the neighborhoods going up around here.

We're going to have an expensive problem in the future with many of these homes that have been built on fill held back by timber walls. Some of the walls I've seen are too close to the houses, and tearing them out will cause the houses to collapse. The only way I can figure to do the repairs will be to support the foundations on steel piers before removing the walls. That will be very expensive.

It will be interesting to see how this all falls out in ten to twenty years.

Bad Engineers

I've talked about Jack Leg Contractors, Bad Foundation Contractors, and a bit about Home Inspectors too. Well, fair is fair, it's time for me to talk about bad engineers. Yep, even our ranks have the poor practitioners.

First, what makes an engineer "bad"? Sometimes it's not the individual. Many years ago I worked for an engineering firm that was completely worthless. I was in college, and it was a part time job. The company hired me, and even though I only had two years of college in the engineering curriculum, they sent me out of town to do a geotechnical investigation. I was assigned to work with "an experienced geotechnical engineer".

I ended up guiding the "experienced geotechnical engineer" from my knowledge gained building my rock collection when I was 10 years old.

I suspect our geotechnical investigation was as good as a water pipeline that the company designed and inspected (it burst when it was first put under pressure).

What kind of engineers worked for that company? Actually, pretty good ones. All were well educated, a couple had major publications to their credit, and they knew their stuff. They just had no clue on how to provide for customers, organize themselves, or put any good ideas on paper for construction. It happens. The company is gone now, it was dissolved by its parent company and all the engineers fired.

When I worked for the Government, I had horrible experiences with firms we hired work out to. Often they appeared to have quality people, those were often the people they put forward to get the contracts. That was often the last time I saw them, I got stuck working with some really bad engineers. The worst design was one to replace the electrical distribution system in two hangars. The design was so bad that the contractor and one of my people had to sit down and redo it while tearing out the old electrical system.

So, there are two ways engineers can be "bad". The first is that they can be very smart, but completely lacking in the sense to put those smarts in use. They will tend to miss deadlines, not be able to create usable designs, and unable to understand what you need as a client. These guys probably did great in school because they wrote lengthy papers, turned in assignments that analyzed stuff to the extreme degree, and stayed up all night every night doing problems instead of partying like most college students (actually, I never partied in college, engineering students don't have much fun in the college years).

The second "bad" engineer is the just plain incompetent engineer. These guys may be trying to do work outside of their area of expertise, or maybe they just lack any analytical skills. Often they just don't care. Some of these guys have repeated failures in their design work. I've had plans supplied by this type of person that have cost me serious dollars in change orders for extra work and delays. Usually this type of engineer works really cheap, and often people feel they are getting a "bargain" because they can hire this type of person for much less than other engineers. Sadly, my experience with this type of engineer is that you end up paying much more in extra construction costs and delays than you saved in fees. Not to mention what kind of cost you can get in a failure.

What do you do? First, when you hire an engineer, check with the Georgia Board of Registration (478-207-2440) to first verify the person is licensed, and second if any disciplinary action has ever been taken against him or her. I would never use an engineer that has been disciplined by the Board. Many counties have lists of approved Third Party Engineers, for residential work, only use people on these lists. Residential engineering is a specialty that requires experience and understanding, much like you wouldn't want a bridge designer put to work on a tunnel. Engineers that work on commercial projects almost never deal with wood, or other types of problems specific to residential work.

If possible, get references. They should be of people that have had similar work done. The references given should have used the engineer for a long time, enough to develop a track record.

In summary, engineering services are not a commodity. The quality of the services you get can vary wildly. When you buy a color TV, you probably spend a lot of time comparing models, prices and quality. When you are going to engage an engineer, you need to do same.

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RUNKLE CONSULTING INC.

Self Supporting Roofs

It is possible to design and build roofs with minimal bracing. There are a few tricks that allow us to do this. First, you need to have a steep slope—6:12 pitch minimum. Also, keep the flat areas at the top of the roofs to a minimum, and if you can make the roofline fairly simple, avoiding complex intersections of hips, ridges and valleys.

We have found that it is necessary to use double LVL (Laminated Veneer Lumber—a type of plywood) beams (3 1/2" thick) in the hips and valleys to carry the loads, singles don't work in the calculations. Also, for longer spans of ridges, we can end up with some fairly deep beams.

As an experiment, we attempted to design a couple of roofs with no bracing at all. You can make it work, but its not advisable. We ended up with triple LVL beams at the hips, and I don't think erecting 5 1/4" thick LVL beams on a roof would be an easy task. Also, at the intersections of the hips and ridges you would have to have custom made hangers, which wouldn't be cheap and would take some time to purchase.

Another attempt at the self-supporting roofs we tried extreme minimal bracing, but we ended up with having to use 3 1/2" x 9 1/2" LVL beams for roof braces. I'd be afraid to go on the job site and face a framer with a nail gun if I released a design like that.

So, as a compromise, we are designing roofs with 2x6 T bracing at the intersections where possible. In some cases we're finding we need double bracing to provide the stability needed.

We're coordinating these designs with the lumber suppliers and builders to make sure they make sense and are cost effective.

Architecturally, our designs are allowing a lot of open space under the roofs, however it is a trade off with time and cost. I don't want to give you architects out there any ideas—remember, we can engineer anything, it's how much you want to pay for it.

From an engineer's standpoint, there is very little leeway in a minimally supported roof. The plans are not suggestions, they must be followed. It's important to use good framing crews for these designs and to keep communication open with us during the erection.

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FRAMING PET PEEVES

We all see on job sites things that are really bad. This past week I had a long discussion a lumber supplier about how much it drives us crazy when shop drawings aren't followed for framing. Often you can see a TJI rafter being used as a foot path across mud puddles, or LVLs used as elevated walkways. That's not what the lumber company provided them for.

Generally, when you get a framing package from the lumber company, there isn't any excess stuff, and its all cut pretty much to length. Still, we'll see framers cut up longer LVLs and use them for headers, or not put in all the beams and joists that are called for.

The lumber company provides a pretty good set of shop drawings showing were everything goes, and how its to be erected. Yet, many jobsites I've been to don't have those drawings on site, and the framers put the stuff up without even seeing the drawing.

For a fairly conventional house, the damage from this might not be so bad. Fortunately, wood is very forgiving. However, houses are getting more and more complex. We're seeing wide open floor plans, bearing walls that don't stack, long spans in floor joists, and some very heavy loads on beams.

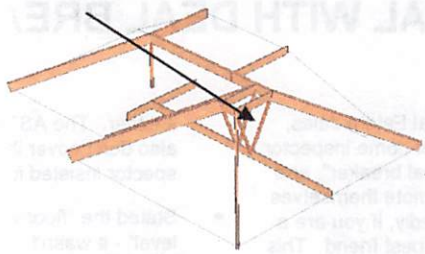
In a more complex floor plan, there isn't much room for error. If you don't put the beams in the right place, the joists aren't doubled where called for in the plans, or worse, you put the wrong joists in the wrong place, you will have serious problems. In time the house will start to deflect, and fixing framing problems after the fact is very expensive. Worse, in severe cases you may end up with a lawsuit, which compounds the pain as you pay attorney's fees, spend hours in depositions, arbitrations, mediations, and court hearings.

All of this can be avoided fairly easily.

- Make sure the engineered lumber shop drawings are on site
- Make sure your framer understands the drawings
- Check on your framer during erection
- Spend some time to find a competent framer that understands engineered lumber and can read plans

A bit of prevention is always better than the cure, which in this business can be expensive and painful.

2 x 6 T Braces



In this roof, we were able to make it support itself without bracing in the first run, but the LVL beams were too large—we put in 4 braces as a compromise.

More than likely the TJI Joists here were supposed to go somewhere other than the front yard at this house.

OSB—BETTER THAN DUCT TAPE

They say that the wonder invention of the 20th Century is duct tape. Oddly, it's really not good for ducts, but I know I've used it for everything else. My '72 Capri was upholstered with it, as well as a couple of my pickups, the soldiers in Iraq use it for all sorts of stuff (labeling things, a hand guard to keep you from burning your hands on hot metal, patching stuff), it's a good temporary repair for just about anything, its use is pretty much only limited by your imagination.

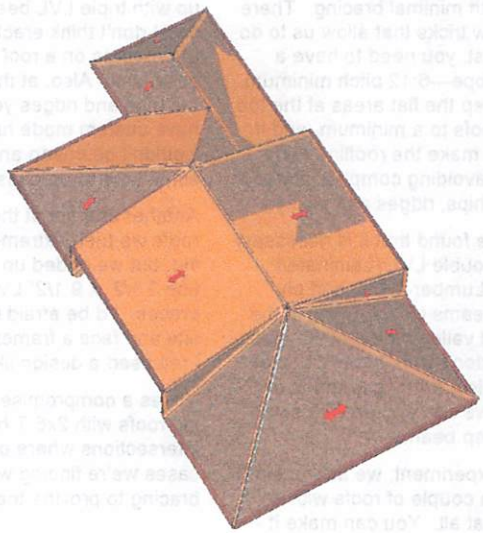
That's fine, but OSB is even more useful in home construction. In the past few months we've been doing some really long drawn out analysis of wood structures with finite element software. One of the surprising things we found out is how much strength OSB adds to a structure.

If you completely sheath a house in OSB, you not only add an amazing amount of lateral stability, it ties all the structural members together. All of a sudden you get an extreme amount of redundancy. Floors, walls, and roofs get much stiffer. It can help compensate for undersized or improperly placed beams, studs, joists, and rafters. All of a sudden, with a house that is 100% sheathed, everything becomes much more stable.

There are also a number of other benefits that don't require extreme analysis to discover. In this area, the biggest damage that you will get from wind storms is from flying stuff (branches, trees, trash). OSB sheathing along the side of the house will provide a stronger barrier to these missiles, protecting the house many times more when thunderstorms strike, and maybe saving the house if a tornado passes by (even if the house isn't saved, it just might save the occupants).

The other advantage of putting up OSB is for security. I've seen houses that you can break into from the side by hand by simply pulling back the siding. In houses with foam board sheathing, all it would take is a screwdriver for an enterprising burglar to get in and take everything not held down.

So, for the minor additional cost of 100% OSB sheathing, a significant benefit is added in stability, resistance to damage, and security.



In this 3d Model, we found by adding OSB sheathing that much less bracing

THE DEAL WITH DEAL BREAKERS

In the world of Real Estate sales, there is one type of home inspector that is called a "deal breaker", and many of them promote themselves as such. Supposedly, if you are a buyer, this is your best friend. This type of home inspector will say that without him or her, you are swimming in a sea of sharks, all determined to eat you alive. Only that individual can help you.

Yeah, right. In practice, when I've seen these guys operate, it's always the same pattern. They walk into a house, write up pages upon pages of junk, almost all unsubstantiated and every item makes it sound like the house is going to fall down. Some of the stuff I've seen them write would be funny if it wasn't for the amount they are costing everyone. Here's some examples:

- Demanded "50lb roof felt" in the valleys of the roof. I've never seen "50 lb roof felt", and since that inspection have never been able to find it. Roofing contractors and suppliers I've talked to haven't seen it either. The ASTM Standards also don't cover it, but the inspector insisted it existed.
- Stated the "floor was out of level" - it wasn't. It was deflecting because it wasn't supported by a beam. The "deal breaker" had pages of garbage on that house, but missed the load bearing wall was unsupported and the house was sagging.
- Wrote that the deck had to be rebuilt because the heads of the nails penetrated the surface, "ruining the pressure treatment". Pressure treated wood is just that—the preservatives are forced into the timber under high pressure to penetrate the entire depth. Nails penetrating the surface don't hurt it.
- Demanded a house be strapped down from ceiling to floor. This is a requirement in hurricane prone areas like Florida. Not in Georgia, and unless you specify it in your contract, a builder is not required to put it in. In my opinion, in this area that type of strapping is a waste, because of the trees. In a high windstorm houses tend to get destroyed by flying debris instead of pushed over by the wind.

The deal breaker will generate lots of money for him or her by a number of methods. There'll be multiple inspections for you as you go look at house after house after house. When you do find a house that you want to buy, Mr. Deal Breaker will want to do reinspections to "check work that is done", will want to have meetings with you, the real estate agent, the builder, county inspector, and anyone else he can think of, generating hourly fees.

In the end, you won't get a better house, you will have just spent more money than necessary for home inspection fees, and wasted a lot of time.

To summarize, you need a good home inspector whose agenda isn't to "deal break", (or conversely help the real estate agent make a sale), but to help you find a decent house.