

Yarnell~Hoffer

HARDWARE NEWS

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PLEASE HELP us get more people on our mailing list. If you know people in the area who do not get a newsletter, please tell them to come by or call to sign up. That's the only way they'll have one sent to them personally each time. We would love to tell more people about things that happen around here. We want them to come to your favorite hardware store, too. After all, where else would you meet friends and neighbors on a Saturday morning with a bag full of rotted out plumbing traps from under the kitchen sink?
Happy Hardware!

COMMENTS! COMMENTS! COMMENTS! COMMENTS! COMMENTS!

If you have a suggestion for something you would like to see in our newsletter, please let me (Mike) know. It can be anything from a suggestion for a feature story to products we have that you think everyone else would like to know about. We'll give you 10% off your next purchase if we put it in the newsletter!

MORE GOOD OL' DAYS

This is the last in a two-part series (doesn't that sound official) of the life and adventures of Mike Hoffer and Craig Yarnell. These stories are all true and we haven't even changed the names to protect the innocent.

Our first story takes place in a quiet little neighborhood off of Finley Golf Course right before Christmas in 1983 (I think). We were rebuilding a big deck on the back of a house that first involved removing the old deck. It was about 18 degrees that day and the wind was blowing so it felt much colder. It was getting dark (we always seemed to work until it was so dark we couldn't see our hammers in our hands), but we wanted to pull the old deck off before we quit. Craig was on his way to get a big load of treated lumber from Tar Heel Wood Treating (incidentally, this is the best place to buy straight treated wood for any outdoor project as long as you put it down right away), and I was working at the job with a guy who now is a Chapel Hill police officer.

We had just about gotten the entire deck loosened so we could support underneath it (by the way, this deck was about eight feet off the ground) when all of a sudden the whole thing came crashing down to the ground. We thought that was okay since we were just about ready to pull it off until we heard what sounded like a cat hissing at us. Well, by this time it was pitch black outside and we couldn't see a thing. I ran up to the truck, got a flashlight and ran back down to the back of the house to see what it was.

What had happened was not something we needed to see at that time of day, especially on a Friday night. The deck had sheared off the outside water spigot and water was shooting out of the copper pipe. As you all know, most of the time, the only cutoff for an outside water spigot

is at the street, so we frantically dug through the toolbox for a pair of vise grips (before we opened a hardware store, we didn't know where to buy a water meter shutoff wrench) and ran up to the street to find the meter! To make matters even worse, we couldn't find the meter. Finally, after digging around in the dirt, we found it and shut the water off to the entire house. Now, you can



imagine that having the water shut off is not something a woman wants to hear about on a weekend during the holidays. I went inside bearing the bad news, but assured her that we would get it fixed right away and it would only take about 30 minutes. I calmly went back outside so she would think that I had everything under control (in reality I was in a panic). I ran out back to survey the damage. Not only was the spigot sheared off, but this house had brick veneer and the pipe was sheared off even with the brick. To make matters worse, the hole around the copper pipe only had about 1/2" of clearance. This meant that we would have to solder another piece of pipe on there because of the small amount of room we had. Now, I'll admit, back in those days, I was not much of a plumber. Craig did all that when we had to do any. I

continued on page 2.

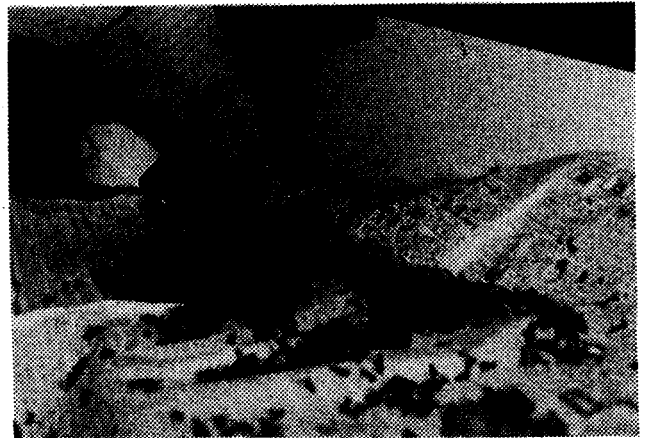
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groped around in the dark until I found my two-way radio to call Craig. My hands were frozen from the water and I remember that I could hardly key the microphone. I called Craig, told him what had happened and asked him what to do. I didn't have a clue, but I knew he would. I could see him shaking his head in the truck, thinking "what did Hoffer do now." He was on his way back so he told me to wait for him.

Craig finally got back, looked at the pipe and sighed in disbelief. At that time of night, there are no supply houses open and we weren't plumbers so we didn't have much in the way of fittings in the truck. We felt sort of like you feel when you try to replace just one of the drain lines under the kitchen sink on a Friday night and the adjoining one crumbles as you tighten the fitting. The only difference is that it was now about 10 degrees outside. That thirty minutes I told her turned into about 3 hours while we tried to come up with a solution to our little problem. About nine o'clock that night we put a temporary fix on the line and staggered out to the truck. Now all we had to do was unload the truck full of wood before we went home. We finally finished for the night and went home cold, very tired and hungry. Monday, we went back and did the real repair job before we continued with our deck project. I must say our customers were very patient with us and were happy with our work despite our plumbing disaster.

One of the other jobs we did was more something that should be put in "That's Incredible" instead of "That's a Disaster." We went over to a house to fill some knotholes on cedar siding and take care of a stain that was apparently running down the interior walls on the same side of the house as the knotholes. We had to rent the biggest extension ladder we could find to reach up to the knotholes (about 50 feet off the ground). Craig was elected to climb the ladder since he was the short one and would do less damage to the ground if he fell; so up the ladder he went. We tied a rope around him and the chimney so if he fell, he would hopefully only be left dangling from the house instead of buried in the ground. He got up to the top rung of the ladder and peered into the hole to see if there was any damage behind the siding. All of a sudden, I heard a scream and felt the ladder swaying back and forth. I couldn't see because I was holding the ladder steady from underneath. I thought Craig had fallen off and was headed down on top of me. I covered my head, looked up and saw him gripping onto the ladder about halfway up. As soon as he had looked into the hole, a squirrel came out very upset that we were bothering him. He ran down the siding and jumped onto a nearby tree. Craig almost had one of those accidents that only our small children have from time to time. I offered to take his place on the ladder but I think he was determined to close that hole up himself. I think that was the most pleasure he ever got out of nailing up a piece of siding in his life.

We finished the outside project and proceeded to tackle the stains on the inside. Since we did all types of work, we had seen just about everything, but we had never imagined we would come across what we were about to see. We had to pry off a section of the wood molding at the ceiling to see where the stain was coming from. We took it off and found some sort of gooey stuff that had a slight sweet smell to it. It was all over the place behind the molding. We proceeded to take down part of the wall and ceiling to get a better look. As soon as we took a small piece of the ceiling down, this stuff started dripping onto the floor. We reached up into the hole and pulled out part of a large honeycomb that was full of honey. Now, we had gotten pretty smart since the third grade and we knew if there was a dripping honeycomb there had to be some bees somewhere to go along with it. We slapped the molding back on the wall and ceiling and called the exterminator. He came over and sprayed the walls and ceiling for us. Since Craig had almost lost his life on the ladder outside, I was chosen to remove the molding again and expose everything. I got up there, stuck my hand in (with gloves of course) and started pulling out honeycomb after honeycomb full of honey. Then I reached over beside the honeycombs and scooped out a handful of dead bees. I was really glad they were dead since they filled up my glove. As I proceeded, I pulled out more dead bees than I had ever seen in my life. We made a pile on the floor (on newspaper, of course) about eight inches high. We filled up about 2 gallon buckets of bees before it was over.



(Pile of dead bees.)

When the people got home, they said they had noticed several bees flying around but hadn't thought much of it. I guess they had come in from around the chimney on the outside of the house and found a nice warm ceiling to nest in.

Those are just two more of the exciting episodes of "Yarnell & Hoffer" in the "GOOD OL' DAYS." We took pictures of most of our jobs, so stop by this month and take a look at the pile of bees and the deck that caused the plumbing disaster. We'll post them up front so you can see what happened in living color!