

1SNEWS1

# THE CHIMNEY SWEEP NEWS

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**ISNEWS**  
**THE CHIMNEY SWEEP NEWS**

*Voice of the Sweep since 1979*

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ON THE COVER  
 Chimney pots at the W.T. Knowles Ltd. factory in  
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 Photo by Charlie Dunn

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# Driving with Don to Sweepfest

By Judd Berg

Judd Berg & Sons, Chimney Sweeps, North Eastham, Massachusetts

Photos (except as noted) by Ian Conway, The Chimney Doctor, Putney, Vermont

John Steinbeck roamed the USA with a pooch and chronicled his adventures in his book *Travels with Charley*. I journeyed between Massachusetts and New Hampshire with some hooch, so now you can read “Driving with Don,” a celebration of the kindred chimney sweep spirit and spirits at Sweepfest 2015.

Riding over the Sagamore Bridge heading off Cape Cod early on a sunny afternoon can give one the impression that with all the cars streaming in the opposite direction my three-hour ride to Newmarket, NH should be a breeze. I “should” beat Boston’s infamous rush hour traffic by being well past the city’s usual 4pm gridlock while everyone else is Cape bound.

Little did I know that rush hour began at noon this day. Since I can find no “road less traveled” to take, I am swallowed up in traffic that adds an extra two hours to my sojourn. Finally I hit the back roads of the Granite State for a



Tents pitched on the Mitchell homestead for the Northeast Association of Chimney and Hearth Professionals’ Sweepfest

Photo by Judd Berg

well needed pit stop, along with the purchase of water, ice, and, of course, beer.

For many years now, on the last weekend of June, I have driven the twisting roads of southern New Hampshire, heeding Phil Mitchell’s savvy advice to always obey the speed limit in his small town, turning on to Bald Hill Rd. and passing the Woodworking School barn, home of the Northeast Association of Chimney and Hearth Professionals annual Sweepfest event. Then a few hundred yards farther on I reach Phil and Sharon Mitchell’s land grant, international headquarters of the Seacoast Sweep and campsite for intrepid tenters and luxury RVers.

It’s the home of the Yankee top burn, not to be confused with the New York State Chimney Sweep Guild’s top burn facility in Chris Prior’s back yard. While a Yankee top burn uses approximately eight 4"x8"x16" cement blocks for its enclosure NY’s is built with enough 8"x8"x16" cement blocks to house a Volkswagen bug.

## Who’s There?

Walking up to Phil’s, I always feel the same anticipation I have arriving at a chimney sweep convention site and entering hotel lobby to check in. I can’t wait to see who is there to get in some “Hellos.” I get my living arrangements in order. Then, I figure I had better get



Brandi Biswell (Flues Brothers Chimney Service, Kansas City, KS) spoke about balancing the various hats you wear as a businessperson.

something to eat so I look for dinner partners.

An event like Sweepfest offers some distinct advantages over a convention. Registration is very affordable and includes all meals beginning on Saturday morning through Sunday breakfast. Soda and water are free to attendees. Camping is free and there is a hot outdoor shower and port-a-potties.

On this particular Friday night, New England Chimney Supply provides steaks, seasoned and cooked to perfection by Pierre Simard, plus assorted other food for the enjoyment of us early birds. Don Julio makes a guest appearance and we reconvene to the campfire for some stargazing and storytelling. The cool night air makes for good sleeping.



## FROM THE EDITOR



### Dear Readers,

It is harvest time. Time to implement all you have learned — in seminars and workshops, in the pages of this and other publications, in school and on your parents' knees — to reap the reward.

Of course, most of us intend and hope to reap some rewards from our businesses every working day throughout the year. However, as we all know so well, this is the season when customers line up and beg for help.

Are you able to help them in a timely fashion? I used to consider it a badge of honor to have a schedule book full for two months. Since those long ago days, many have pointed out the folly of this approach. For starters, people seem to be increasingly impatient and are not that likely to wait a long time. You do not want to let people slip away — obviously that doesn't provide income and it suggests to those people that they should write you off for any future work. If you cannot get to your customers before someone else, you have two alternatives — raise your prices to reduce demand to a level you can handle, or add employees and equipment so you can rise to the demand.

Thanks for making time to read *The Chimney Sweep News* during this hectic season. Best wishes for full bushel baskets!

*Chimney Jim*



**Jeff Stewart of WeatherTite Industries recommends that sweeps practice their customer presentations.**

If there is one constant when it comes to chimney sweep gatherings, you can count on Bob Fish (Bob Fish Inc, Londonderry, VT) being the first one up and looking for coffee. Why should Sweepfest be any different? I joined Bob for the stroll to the barn and soon newly arriving attendees were draining Dunkin' Donuts coffee boxes while eggs, bacon, sausage, and some of Ian Conway's (The Chimney Doctor, Putney, VT) delicious homemade kielbasa cooking on the grill. Sweepfest 2015 has begun.

### Where You Want to Go

Lindemann Chimney Company's Mike Boudart kicked off the day's seminars with the topic, "How to Get Where You Want to Go." Mike was hired to help grow Lindemann's business. When he came on board, the Chicago-area based company employed four sweeps. Growing a business is not an easy thing to do and Mike utilized a business coach to show him what he didn't know and to teach him what

he needed to know. It appears to have worked, as Lindemann will employ 20-25 sweeps this year with a goal of \$10,000,000 in revenue. Currently, the sweeps in Lindemann's employ earn between \$55,000 and \$160,000 per year. The company goal is to raise revenue by 25% this year.

Mike gave us some very interesting insight into Lindemann's chimney service business. When a service appointment is booked it becomes what they call an "opportunity." For each "opportunity" last year, Lindemann averaged \$1050 in sales. The term they use is SPO (sales per opportunity). He put it like this: "Your phone ringing is the sound of \$1000 trying to make its way into your pocket." (As an aside here, I must mention that some of the prices that were quoted for various services the company provides caused many of attendees' jaws to drop.)

Lindemann utilizes big service vehicles able to carry many sizes and styles of caps, waterproofing materials, etc. The trucks do not carry liners. Each truck is booked for three jobs per day figuring three hours per appoint-



**Lucas Conway (The Chimney Doctor, Putney, VT), Judd Berg and Russ Moore soak up information.**



Pierre Simard, Phil Mitchell and Chris Simard supervise the grill.

Photo by Judd Berg

ment. There is no charge for inspections and each flue is scanned. Reports and proposals are given to the customer on site.

As an additional bit of advice, Mike

recommends only hiring a sweep who is “awesome” and can “work a kitchen table well” in dealing with a customer.

## How to Explain Vapor Permeability

Jeff Stewart of WeatherTite Industries spoke on “Specific Sales Training.” He stressed the importance of professionalism and integrity, of creating great first impressions of yourself to your customer. He utilized attendees in play-acting sweep/customer encounters, recommending that sweeps should practice their individual presentations.

Jeff also gave a great tip to those who want to explain how vapor permeability works in regards to water repellents. He suggested taking a coffee cup partially

filled with water and holding a piece of Gore-Tex® over it. Holding the cup upside down and the Gore-Tex tight on the cup the water will not leak out. Now turn the cup upright, put the Gore-Tex over the top of the cup and put the cup in a microwave for a number of seconds. Steam will rise up through the Gore-Tex. Pretty cool tip.

As pizza arrived for lunch, we took a break. Sitting in the shade of the big tent I realized that of the 25 or so attendees and including the vendor reps, Bob Fish and I were the oldest folks there. Maybe not Fred Toldo old, but still...

## Russ Dimmitt's Tips

First-time Sweepfest attendee Russ Dimmitt from Copperfield Chimney

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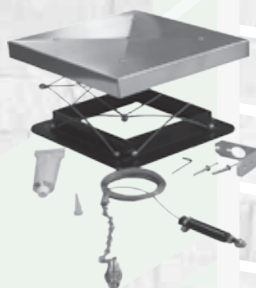
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**The late Fred Toldo, seventh generation sweep from Pawcatuck, CT, on the cover of the August 1986 issue of SNEWS.**

Supply opened the afternoon program with 30 Ideas in 90 Minutes. Russ always has some gems that can improve your business and your life. Here are just a few:

- Save time by making a phone call rather than texting.
- Hire a senior citizen to answer your phone during work hours because it is good to have a live voice answering your business phone.
- Sixty percent of sales are closed after the fourth ask to close.
- Try having a booth at non-conventional shows like a flower, garden, or boat show rather than the regular home show.
- Leave a day open every week on your schedule so you can play catch-up for work or just rest and relax.
- Keep your answering machine current. You don't want to wish callers "Happy Springtime" when it's July.

From late morning until dinner-time, attendees were able to see products and talk to vendors who set up booths

in a tent adjacent to the seminar area. While an event like Sweepfest is small-scale compared to a convention there are definite advantages for both vendors and sweeps.

New NCSG Region 1 rep Mike Elliott (Central New England Chimney Sweep) followed Russ by introducing himself to the group and promising to be attentive to the needs of all his constituents.

From late morning until dinnertime, attendees were able to see products and talk to vendors who set up booths in a tent adjacent to the seminar area. While an event like Sweepfest is small-scale compared to a convention, I find I am able to establish a much better rapport with the vendors reps and get to know their products and services when I don't have to stand in a long line to get to talk with them as sometimes happens at a national show. A big thank you to all the vendors, both for allowing me their attention and for contributing to the auction that followed the trade show.

Speaking of the auction, Ian Conway did his best Randy Atkinson impression with a wonderful calling of the auction bids. Diane Pilger (Chief Chimney Services, Smithtown, NY) provided adept bid recording that in the end totaled around \$3000 in proceeds.

After feasting on barbecue chicken, brisket, beans and cornbread, some sweeps headed home for the day while others adjourned to the Yankee top burn campfire which was built by newly accredited Yankee top burn technician Matt Mair (Black Moose Chimney and Stove LLC, Antrim, NH ). A notable

figure joining the campfire crew this year was the host himself, Phil Mitchell. With no band obligations, Phil grooved to the flames of the fire. All went well until about 10:30pm when the first raindrops began to fall. What is a sweep gathering in the Northeast without a little weather to liven things up?

Luckily for me, I had paid attention to the forecast and picked up all my camping gear earlier in the evening as Ian Conway offered me refuge in a camper where we were high and dry while torrential rain and windy conditions would have raised havoc in my previously pitched tent.

Sunday morning after breakfast, Brandi Biswell (Fluesbrothers Chimney Service, Kansas City, KS) spoke about "Balancing Hats" both inside and outside our professional lives. Work at those times of day when we find ourselves to be most productive, and create a "white space" where we have time to think. Also important is to find time to play with your employees outside of work. Brandi's seminars always teach us how to be healthier in body and mind.

Then it was time for goodbyes all around as another Sweepfest came to a close. As I drove away, I could only think how lucky we are to have sweeps like Phil Mitchell and Chris Prior (Adirondack Chimney Co, Middle Grove, NY) willing to share their acreage so that we all can gather together in the spirit of friendship and learning. My friend Don Julio agrees.



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# Golden State Guild Meets in San Bernardino

*Photos and descriptions by Steve Snyder  
Big Steve's Chimney Service  
San Luis Obispo, California*



Rich Vogeler (Right Way Chimney Service, Newbury Park, CA — foreground, back to camera, no hat) demonstrated how to reface a fireplace. Inside an air-conditioned meeting room, Steve Lovsteen (Oliver Twist Chimney Sweep & Air Duct Cleaning, Huntington Beach, CA) was the first volunteer to apply stucco-stone material to face using 'Spec-Mix' mortar. On this same working fireplace/chimney system, Steve Lovsteen also put on a presentation demonstrating the SmokeTite spray system for parging a smoke chamber.



Peter Phagan from Lindemann Chimney Co. was an active participant/donor in activities throughout our GSCSG Convention. Part of Pete's presentation to our guild was

showing the new Lindemann universal chimney cap and top mount damper. The new universal cap is very similar to a popular cap no longer readily available from a company in Southern California.



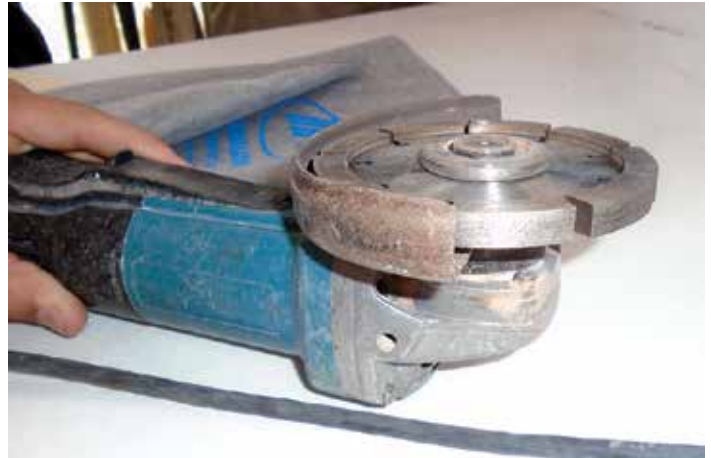
Relaxing around the pool, Eric Crankshaw (Advanced Chimney & Dryer Vent Cleaning, Murrieta, CA), Michael Morrison (Chimney Champ, San Diego, CA), John Bordelon (Acadiana Chimney Sweeps, Lafayette, LA) came all the way from Louisiana! and our hosts Keith Jackson and Marla LeFevre (Ye Old Brit Chimney Sweep, San Bernardino, CA). Keith and Marla donated a great amount of time, effort, and money to produce the convention and provide a campground at their house.

Jim Crawford (Authentic Fireplaces Inc, San Diego, CA) at table with trowel, demonstrated how to cut out mortar joints and tuck point a chimney. Using a brick veneer demonstration board behind him, he showed how to best use a grout bag to fill joints. Jim, like Rich Vogeler, used 'Spec-Mix' mortar. Diamond plated grind out wheels, on a 4" grinder, come in different thicknesses. I did not know that. When removing old mortar and preparing the joint





scrape mortar into joint. With proper mortar consistency, and the correct sized hole cut at end of grout bag (don't make hole too big), the bag is a faster, neater, way to completely fill the joint.



Thick blade is useful for grinding out mortar joints.

between bricks, why make four passes with a thin diamond blade when a 3/8" wide blade face can do it in one pass? And the thicker blade will make the finished work look better, too. I am going to start using a grout bag again for mortar placement in new joint. I had been using hand tools to



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# Masons Exceed Expectations at MHA Contest

By Marge Padgitt

Hearthmasters / Padgitt Chimney & Fireplace  
Independence, Missouri

The Masonry Heater Association annual contest was held in April at Wildacres Retreat, Little Switzerland, North Carolina. Masons and craftspeople were asked to present their best work in three categories: masonry, bake ovens, and masonry heaters. There were three trophies awarded in each category. This year, some of the best work yet seen was entered in the contest.

Each entrant was required to take before, during, and after photos, and provide a detailed explanation and description of the project and materials used for judges to examine. Judges did not know who did the work in order to assure fairness in the

contest. Some entrants missed placing by only one point, and all of the projects submitted were top quality, demonstrating the outstanding craftsmanship of the participants.

Materials used in the designs were varied and used in unique ways. Entrants used such products as custom-cut steel, stone, brick, and custom-fired clay Kachels in their work.

There were 16 entries from several countries, including the United States, Canada, Scotland, and Germany. Attendees and instructors at the MHA annual meeting came from all over the world.



First place winner masonry heater built by Dave Wilcox (Wilcox Masonry, Wapakoneya, OH).

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## General Masonry

This category includes anything built out of masonry including houses, pathways, walls, chimneys, fireplaces, etc.

- 1st: Derek Kowalchuck, Fiddlerock Masonry, Edmonton, AB, Canada
- 2nd: Jeff Owens, JTO Masonry Construction, Riverview, MI
- 3rd: Ryan McCutchan, Humboldt Hearsthones, Blue Lake, CA

## Bake Ovens

Bake ovens are site-built appliances used for indoor or outdoor cooking and baking and are constructed with an inner masonry oven with an outer finish of tile, Kachels, brick, stone, or stucco. A roof is usually built over outdoor ovens to protect the inner components.

- 1st: Jessica Steinhauser, Stonehouse Pottery, Guelph, ON, Canada
- 2nd: Martin Swift, Swift Masonry, Sooke, BC, Canada
- 3rd: Jeff Owens, JTO Masonry Construction, Riverview, MI

## Masonry Heaters

Masonry heaters are site-built appliances that use wood to generate heat for the home. The concept is hundreds, if not thousands of years old. A configuration of channels is built into the masonry structure, which retains heat, then releases it slowly and evenly without the use of fans, ducts, gas or electricity. Masonry heaters have an inner masonry core with an outer finish that may be constructed of tile, Kachels, brick, stone, or stucco.

- 1st: Dave Wilcox, Wilcox Masonry, Wapakoneya, OH
- 2nd: Martin Ruzicka, Stovemason Masonry Heater Builders, Ardovie Lodge, Brechin, Scotland
- 3rd: Axel Schmitz, Masonry FireTube, Elterlein, Germany



**First place bakeoven built by Jessica Steinhauser (Stonehouse Pottery, Guelph, Ontario).**

More photos of these projects are on the MHA website at [www.mha-net.org](http://www.mha-net.org).

The Masonry Heater Association of North America is a non-profit organization of builders and manufacturers of masonry heaters and masonry wood-fired bake ovens. Its purpose is to promote the industry, sponsor research and development, shape regulations, standards and codes, inform and educate the public, and further the expertise and professionalism of its membership.

The MHA sponsors professional educational programs in the USA and Canada throughout

the year, and members offer private workshops and schools. The association has an annual meeting in North Carolina where industry professionals share different construction techniques. The MHA certifies Heater Masons, and will soon offer a certification program for oven builders. Currently there are 33 Certified Heater Masons in the United States and Canada.

Contact Richard Smith, Executive Director of the MHA at 850-883-0191 or email [execdir@mha-net.org](mailto:execdir@mha-net.org) for more information about the MHA.



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# PRODUCTS & SERVICES

## New Kid on the Chimney Liner Block

By Sooty Bob Daniels  
Hose Master, Inc.

In this article, I am going to review some liner history, give a tip of the hat to liner development pioneers, and then describe the new kid on the chimney liner block. (I know him pretty well.) Remember when cell phones were as big as bricks? But we still loved them because they were way better than no cell phone at all.

Whoever came out with the first brick cell phone deserves a place in history. But that doesn't mean we still use bricks to make calls. Technology has evolved and there are way better options.

Chimney liners are no different.

Once upon a time, the first chimney liner was heavy interlocked flex. As I recall, Sleepy Hollow was the first to come out with it, then HomeSaver followed, and after a while it was everywhere. It's still appropriate sometimes, but more user-friendly technology has long since replaced the heavy flex that was the cat's meow in the 1980s and 90s.

Today the state of the art liner is light, easy to maneuver, and easy to take up on the roof. It is so user-friendly it makes the heavy stuff look like a brick cell phone. And there are a number of leading light liner brands out there — all very adequate stuff.

But the bane of relining since day one — whether relining with heavy or light liner — has been installing insulation. And you need insulation to have a UL listing. There is not a UL listed brand out there not requiring insulation.

The first insulating material was TherMix that you poured in around the liner. Then there was blanket wrap, which we thought was the bees' knees. Then that was improved with foil-faced blanket wrap, then mesh to go around the insulation so it would not tear going down the chimney.

Still, when you got done gluing, taping and meshing you were exhausted before you hauled it up on the roof and tried to put it down the chimney.

Then an innovative manufacturer came up with the concept of pre-insulation, which includes the liner itself, the proper blanket insulation and then a flexible metal outer liner. And

it comes that way from the factory. Bam, in the blink of an eye this had eliminated the wrapping, meshing, gluing and a lot of the cursing at the whole lining adventure.

But there was/is a downside to the first pre-insulated liner. It is stiff; it's hard to work with. It unrolls with great difficulty. Though a healthy number of sweeps have chosen to just live with these disadvantages, many are waiting on the sidelines until pre-insulated liner is easy to work with. In other words, they're using their brick phones until someone invents the iPhone.

During the last couple of years while suppliers were bringing pre-insulated liner to the market, it was fair to ask, "Where is Sooty Bob and HomeSaver in all this? Why don't they have pre-insulated Ultra Pro?"

The answer is HomeSaver wanted to have a better mouse-trap. An iPhone or a Droid if you will, instead of that brick phone.

So we were in the lab, working on a unique way to apply the insulation and outer skin that would be a huge advancement in flexibility and user-friendliness.

And we did it.

I am happy to announce that HomeSaver has joined the pre-insulated family with a patent pending system of applying the insulation and outer aluminum that allows it to unroll as easily as HomeSaver UltraPro — and way more easily than the pre-insulated products that were first to market.

Copperfield has decided to call it UltraPro Pre-Insulated and you will see it in their fall catalog.

All diameters — except 8" — will fit between the wheel wells of a pick-up. When you take it out of the box it uncoils easily compared to previous pre-insulated offerings. And if you want to roll an unused portion back up and put it back in the box — well, it is flexible enough you can do that, too.

So when your Copperfield Pro Book shows up, take a look, and give Pre-insulated UltraPro a try. And check the video at <https://www.copperfield.com/HomeSaver-UltraPro-Pre-Insulated>.



Sooty Bob Daniels

*more Products & Services on page 14*



**HOME SAVER® ULTRA PRO™**  
*Pre-Insulated*

**Finally – a pre-insulated liner good enough to be called HomeSaver®!**

UltraPro™ Pre-Insulated uses a process so unique to the industry that it is **patent-pending**.

**What makes it special?**

It's the spiral wrapping which creates joints in the insulation as well as the outer shell so they can flex as easily as the core UltraPro™ hose inside. Without tearing.

**Five performance hurdles that had to be cleared.** UltraPro™ Pre-Insulated had to

Be **EXTREMELY FLEXIBLE** **AND**

**MAINTAIN THE INTEGRITY** of the insulation blanket **AND**

Be **RUGGED** **AND**

It had to **WEIGH THE LEAST** amount possible **AND**

Be **AFFORDABLE**

We chose to not settle for only two or three of these qualities. **We had to deliver on them all.**



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# PRODUCTS & SERVICES

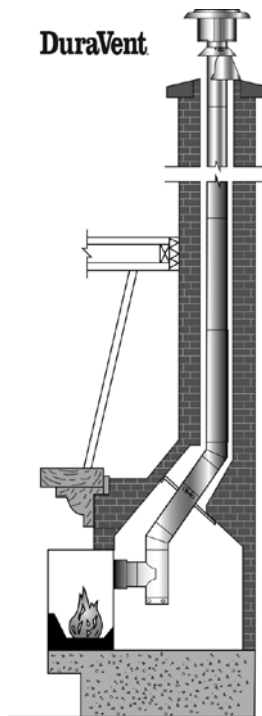
## M&G DuraVent Offers Ventinox Rigid

The Ventinox family has been expanded to offer rigid liner for use in existing or new masonry chimneys. The rigid stainless steel liner is used to mend and improve masonry chimney liners that vent Category I solid, liquid or gas-fuel (coal, wood, oil, etc) fired appliances.

Ideal for use when the clay liner of an existing chimney is damaged. Ventinox Rigid is available in 5" up to 8" diameters in 304-type stainless steel.

- Excellent resistance to corrosion.
- 1/2" clearance to masonry chimney.
- Double-lock seam.
- Unique twist-lock system.
- Improves the chimney's draft.
- Can be used as a substitute for the clay liner in a new masonry chimney.
- Listed under UL 1777, ULC S635M & ULC S640M.

Controlled-combustion stoves are designed to efficiently transfer heat and utilizing clean combustion technologies. Their performance increases when they are installed with a chimney of proper diameter.



## American Chimney Supply Introduces New Liner System for Gas & Oil

ProForm Chimney Restoration™ is a non-destructive chimney lining system that conforms to any shape, size or length chimney. ProForm Chimney Restoration™ is a corrosion-proof, flame and heat resistant, airtight liner tube made of a composite material with the rigidity of steel, without any joints.

The main area of application of DualFuel-ProForm Chimney Restoration™ is the lining of existing and new chimneys. It is UL listed for use with gas and oil heated boilers. It may be used with all types of boilers.

Suitable for residential, commercial, and industrial chimneys in lengths up to 350' and 40" in diameter.

DualFuel-PROFORM chimney liner is to be installed in masonry chimneys venting gas or oil fired appliances only. The liners are manufactured in sizes of 3-inch to 40-inch outside diameters. The chimney liners are intended for installation in masonry chimneys having a minimum height of 25 feet and a maximum height of 350 feet. Its rigidity characteristics enable

it to be used for the construction of freestanding chimneys as well.

The material of DualFuel-ProForm made from three main components:

- Interlocking tube-shaped sleeve for installation purpose only. It is removed after steam curing.
- Prepreg layer — This is glass fiber reinforced thermosetting resin with ceramic filler, a so-called composite material.
- Exterior fiber — this layer made from special fabric, non-elastic, outer layer to prevent physical abuse.

The liner is initially flexible in shape and easy to insert in a brick chimney. The top end is tied to seal in the steam. Apply steam at bottom of the liner up to 300 degrees F and pressure up to 2.25 psi for two hours until it cures as solid construction.

The internal layer facilitates installation, it is a thin-walled (.004" - .006") plastic hose made of a mixture of thermoplastic components. Its size suits the desired diameter. It softens at 230°F and is easily combustible.

The intermediate composite layer is the heat, flame and corrosion resistant structural material of the DualFuel-ProForm chimney liner tube. The composite is resin of high solid-ity reinforced with thin glass fibers. The resin surrounds and embeds the glass fibers, cementing them to each other. The resin transfers forces from one glass fiber to another and protects the glass fibers from corrosion.

The solidity of composite materials is determined by the amount, type and direction of the thinner-than-hair reinforcing fibers. One square of the 2-mm thick wall structure of the DualFuel-ProForm liner tube contains 3,000,000 meters of glass fiber.

The diameter of the reinforcing glass fibers in DualFuel-ProForm is .005", which are used in the form of fabric. The rigidity of glass fibers is the same as that of steel, but they are three times lighter.

The external layer is a thin fabric woven from synthetic fiber. Its function is to protect the composite layer and to ensure the exact perimeter of the chimney tube. Its other function is to form a homogeneous external surface.

For more information and dealership opportunities, please visit <http://www.proformchimney-restoration.com>



**Chris Arbucci of American Chimney Supplies with Proform Chimney Restoration liner.**



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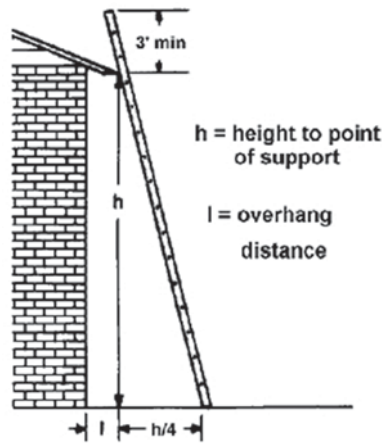
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# Safe Ladder Practices Checklist

- When portable ladders are used for access to an upper landing, the side rails extend at least three feet above the upper landing. When this is not possible, the ladder is secured to a rigid support at its top and a grab rail is available to help employees get off the ladder.
- Ladders are free of oil, grease, and other hazards that could cause slips.
- Ladders are not loaded beyond the manufacturer's duty rating.
- Ladders are used only for the purpose for which they were designed.
- Extension ladders are placed so that the working length of the ladder is four times the horizontal distance from the ladder's base to the structure — a 4:1 ratio.
- Ladders are used on stable, level surfaces or they are secured so that they cannot be displaced.
- Ladders used on slippery surfaces are secured or have anti-slip footings.
- All ladders, except stepladders, have non-slip safety feet.
- Employees are prohibited from placing ladders on boxes, barrels, and other unstable objects.
- Ladders used near passageways, doorways, or driveways are protected so that vehicles or pedestrians do not strike them.
- The area around the top and bottom of a ladder is free from slipping and tripping hazards.
- The top of a non-self-supporting ladder is placed so that both rails are supported equally.
- Ladders are not moved, shifted, or extended when they are occupied.
- Ladders that could contact exposed energized electrical equipment have nonconductive side rails.
- Portable aluminum ladders have legible signs reading "CAUTION: Do Not Use Around Electrical Equipment" or equivalent wording.
- The top step of a stepladder is not used as a step.
- Cross bracing on the rear section of a stepladder is not used for climbing unless the ladder is designed for that purpose.
- Employees are prohibited from using ladders that are missing steps, rungs, cleats, or have broken side rails or other faulty parts.
- A competent person inspects ladders periodically for defects and after any occurrence that could damage them.
- Defective ladders are marked as defective or are tagged "Do Not Use" and removed from service until they are repaired.
- Repaired ladders meet their original design criteria before they are returned to service.
- Employees face ladders while climbing and descending.
- Employees use at least one hand to grasp the ladder when they are climbing and descending.
- Employees do not carry objects or loads that could cause them to lose their balance.
- Employees who use ladders receive training from a competent person in proper use, placement, and handling.
- Employees know the hazards associated with ladder use and follow procedures that minimize the hazards.
- Retraining is provided periodically to ensure that employees maintain their knowledge of proper ladder use, placement, and handling.



Source: Oregon OSHA



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# The Three by Five Chimney Sweep Journal

By Greg Duffy

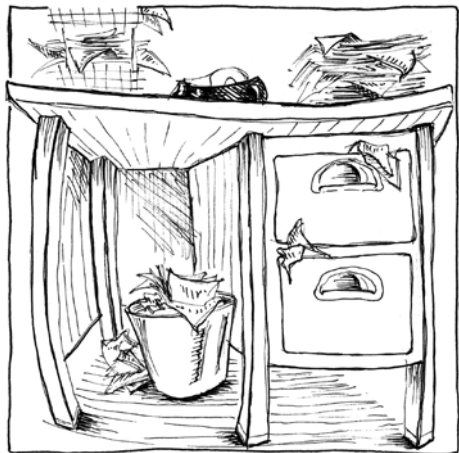
Boise, Idaho

Illustrations by Laura Eaton Jones

On Saturday morning, I had breakfast, and then I got a garbage bag and went down to my office.

I retired several years ago. Saturday was the day I finally got around to cleaning out my office. After years of neglect, my office was a mess. I reached under the desk and pulled out my wastebasket, dumping its contents into the garbage bag. I was about to push the wastebasket back in place when I saw a pile of papers that must have fallen behind it. I reached under, raked the papers out, and spread them on the floor.

I grabbed handfuls of papers and started shoving them into the bag, but



one small crumpled index card stood out. I flattened it to see if it was important. On the card was a date: Thursday, October 9, 2003. Under the date, I had written the names of two customers.

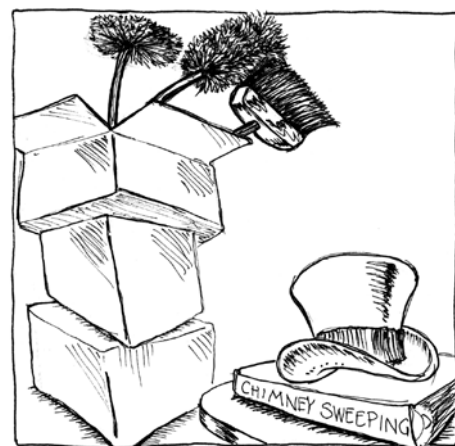
I sat down in my office chair. I had forgotten the date, but I remembered that night when I tossed that index card under my desk toward the wastebasket. My memories went all the way back to the very beginning.

To tell the story of that index card I should start there.

I made my big career move in 1989 when I answered an ad in *Popular Mechanics* magazine. I sent money off to a company and in return, that company sent me several boxes of equipment, a manual, and a top hat.

The manual explained how to use the equipment to clean a fireplace, and that was how I became a chimney sweep.

Chimney sweeping was all new to me, but I had started another business before. I was no stranger to hard work,



and I am well organized.

One part of my system is that I always kept a three by five index card in my shirt pocket. During the day, I used the index card to write down things I needed to remember.

Once my business was established, I would spend a couple of hours each evening calling customers to schedule chimney cleanings. When my phone calls were done and I was ready to call it a day, I would reach for that index card to make sure I didn't miss anything.

In November 2002 my chimney cleaning schedule brought me to Idaho City, a small town in the mountains, an

hour's drive north of Boise. In the woods outside of town was Mary and Jerry's cabin.

It had snowed the night before and seeing their little cabin surrounded by newly fallen snow was gorgeous.

When I knocked at the front door, I noticed that it was dark inside. After driving so far, if a customer wasn't home when I came to clean a chimney it really made a mess out of my schedule.

So I knocked again, I saw some movement inside as I looked through the window. A door opened in the back and I saw Jerry come out and open the front door.

"May I help you?" Jerry asked.

"Hi Jerry," I said. "I'm here to clean your wood stove."

"I don't remember calling you," Jerry said.

"Mary called me last week to set it up. I can see how it could have slipped your mind."

"You could be right." Jerry said nodding his head. He stepped back revealing a small black terrier. He turned to the dog and in a commanding voice said, "Sparky, rip this man to shreds."

Sparky, stood motionless except for his wagging tail.



Jerry turned back to me and smiled. "I guess I should have told Sparky what that means. Come on in."

This is how it went every year. I went

out to the truck. First trip I brought in my painter's tarp and spread it out on the floor in front of the stove.

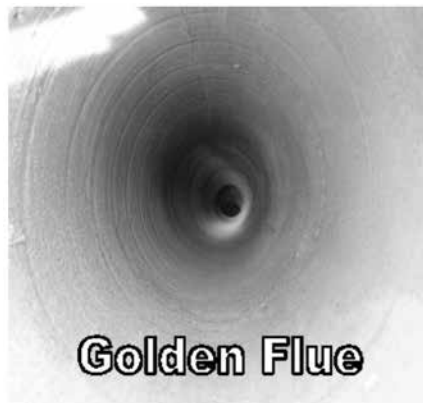
Jerry said, "Did you hear the one about..." I stopped and listened. When he finished I laughed. It was the same joke he told last year.

I went back to the truck. Second trip, I brought my tool bag and the vacuum.

"Jerry, I'm going up on your roof, to clean the chimney. I'll be back in a few minutes."

I went on the roof and brushed

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# VENTINOX. RIGID FACTORY BUILT LINING SYSTEM

The Ventinox family has just gotten bigger, now offering rigid liner for use in existing or new masonry chimneys.

Stainless steel liner with superior strength. The Ventinox. Rigid system is ideal for a variety of applications, including when the clay liner of an existing chimney is damaged, to improve the chimney's draft, or as a substitute for the clay liner in a new masonry chimney.

## PRODUCT FEATURES

- 304 stainless steel
- Twist-lock assembly
- Double-lock seam
- 5" to 8" diameters
- ULC S635M,  
ULC S640M & UL 1777

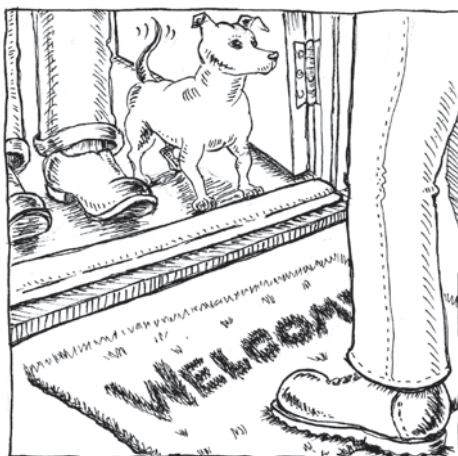


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down the chimney flue. I replaced the cap. I came off the roof and put my ladder back on the truck.

I went inside and shoveled out the firebox, vacuumed it clean, then looked inside with my flashlight.

I packed up all my equipment: first trip I took my tool bag and vacuum. Second trip I came for the painter's tarp. When everything was packed away in the truck, I wrote my report.

By the time I got back inside Jerry was in the back room.

I called out, "Jerry, I'm done."

Jerry and Sparky emerged from a back room.

"Everything looks fine," I told Jerry, "Here's my report. Let's leave it on the table for Mary to see it."

Jerry looks embarrassed and says, "I don't have any money for you."

"That's okay," I said. "Mary already told me she'd be sending me a check. It's all taken care of."

"That's good," Jerry said. "My memory isn't so good. Did I tell you, the doctor thinks I have Alzheimer?"

"Yes, Jerry, you told me last time I was out, but you seem fine to me."

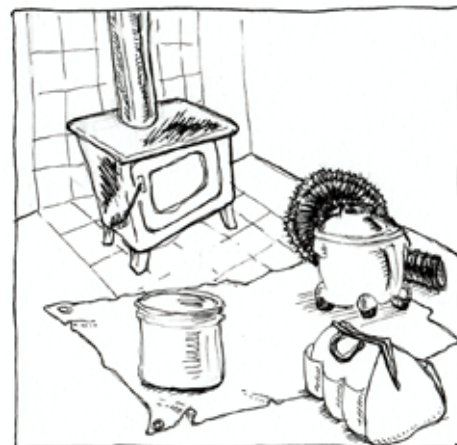
Jerry pointed out a window and said, "Last summer I took Sparky down to the lake.

"It was getting dark and I told Sparky we needed to head home. I started heading up the trail to go back to the cabin. I noticed Sparky wasn't following along. I looked behind me and Sparky was standing on a different path. I called him, but he wouldn't budge. Something told me I should follow Sparky.

"When I followed, Sparky took me up that path and that's how we got back to the cabin. I don't know what I would have done if I didn't have the good sense to follow Sparky."

I said that Sparky had proven himself to be a very good dog.

The following season in late autumn 2003, I was working in the Idaho City



## CSIA Education 2015

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Please contact us prior to making travel arrangements: [office@csia.org](mailto:office@csia.org) | 317-837-5362



### CSIA Certified Chimney Sweep® Review & Exam

September 18 | Atlantic City, NJ

October 16 | Albany, NY

November 13 | CSIA Technology Center



CSIA CEUs: 1.50-T, 1.50-CS, 1.50-HS, 1.50-CL NFI CEUs: 6-T

### National Chimney Sweep Training School

Sept. 28 – Oct. 3 | CSIA Technology Center

Fundamentals of sweeping and inspection of chimney systems, equipment operation, health and safety considerations and step-by-step instruction in codes, clearances, standards and practices. Space is limited so sign up as soon as you can. CSIA CEUs: 4-T, 4-CS, 4-CL, 4-HS NFI CEUs: 16-T

### CSIA Certified Dryer Exhaust Technician® 2-Day Workshop/ Exam

November 5 – 6 | CSIA Technology Center

In-person intensive review sessions, along with hands-on instruction involving clothes dryers, accessories, and tools. You'll drill through brick, and learn how to do duct rerouting. C-DET certification also gets you listed on [dryersafety.org](http://dryersafety.org). CSIA CEUs: 9-T, .5-CS, .5-HS, 1-CL



### CSIA C-DET® Review/ Exam

September 17 | St. Louis [NADCA Fall Technical Conference]

### Inspection and Report Writing

Oct. 15 – 16 | CSIA Technology Center

Chimney inspections and evaluations, report writing including regional and environmental influences, effective photo documentation, digital organization and administrative procedures. CSIA CEUs: 4-T, 4-CS, 4-CL NFI CEUs: 12-T

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## Strength in numbers



again. I hadn't heard from Mary but I knew where her shop was so I stopped in and asked for her at the counter.

The woman behind the counter said, "We bought this shop from Mary last spring."

I told the woman that I was the chimney sweep who I cleaned Mary's chimney every year. The woman said that last she heard, Mary had bought a house in Boise.

There was nothing more to say, so I left.

On the drive back to Boise I was thinking. If Mary bought a house in Boise, she would have called me for a chimney cleaning or at least an inspection. Also, the shop owner said, "Mary bought a house in Boise." She didn't say, "Mary and Jerry." I worried that Jerry might have gotten worse.

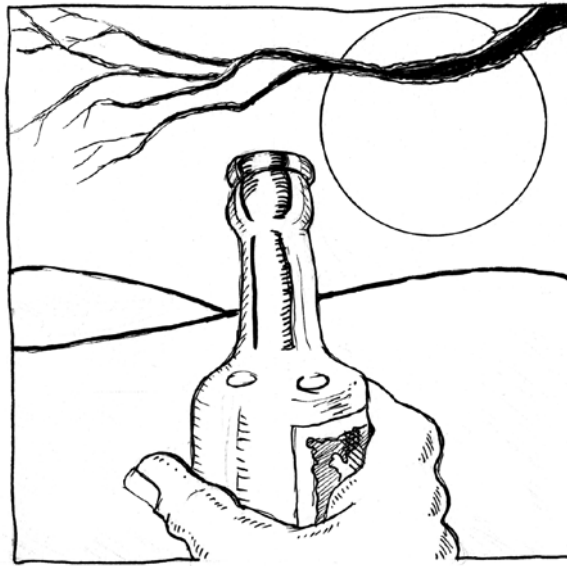
After dinner with my family, I went to my office to make my calls as I always did. When I finished my last call, it was after nine. That's when I reached for my index card. The only thing I had written on the card that day were the names, Mary and Jerry.

I reached for a phone book. There was no listing. I called information. Nothing.

I got up from my desk gripping that index card in my hand as if to set it down

would make me forget.

I turned off the light. That part of the house was dark. I headed for the living room, where my wife was on the phone. I waved to her as I walked by on



my way to the kitchen.

It had been a long day, so I got a beer out of the fridge before stepping out the back door into the yard.

It was a cold night. The large maple had already dropped its leaves and between the branches, I could see a full moon beginning to rise above the foothills.

I felt something stirring inside me. My hand was crushing the index card over and over again. I was about to go back to my office and toss that damn card in the waste basket, but something deep inside me was making me feel like speaking into that cold, dark night.

I thought about what I needed to say.

As the words came to me they began to sound like a toast I might hear at a party, or maybe it was a prayer — a prayer with a beer.

A small part of me still remembers my catholic upbringing. That part of me was voting for the prayer and the beer.

I also remember someone once told me that God is always listening, so I began.

"It's been a long time since we talked. You know me. I don't ask for much. I lost some customers today and I am afraid I will never see them again. Tonight I'm asking for a favor."

I stopped myself. "No, what I'm asking for is a miracle. This should be easy for you. I'm not sure I'll even know if I received my miracle."

I lifted my beer to the rising moon and said, "For Mary and Jerry. I ask that Sparky watch over them and may he always be there to guide them home."



# SNEWS BRIEFS

## CSIA Certifications Surpass 1600

The number of chimney sweeps certified by the Chimney Safety Institute of America is on the upswing. "Certified Chimney Sweep® numbers have jumped from 1391 in May 2014 to 1611 in mid-July," reported Tom Spalding, CSIA's Director of Communications and Marketing. "CSIA President Mark A. Stoner's goal is to get to 1900 and beyond," Tom said. "We're holding steady with our Certified Dryer Exhaust Technician credential at 325 personnel in mid-July," he added.

CSIA is currently revising the manuals used for CCS and C-DET training. "We're on track to debut the new manuals in 2016," Tom noted.

CSIA's Troubleshooting and Installing Gas Hearth Appliances course in late July, taught by Jim Brewer and Mike Van Buren, attracted 25 students, the most ever for this course.

MAJ-Tools donated a set of their Pete Luter Innovation Award winning roof ladders to the CSIA Technology Center. "We set it up in our lab and let National Chimney Sweep Training School students eyeball it during class last month," Tom said. Blackburn's Chimney Services (Columbus, OH) recently committed \$5000 to CSIA in honor of the late Steve Blackburn.

## Maine Association Sponsors Free CCP Certification for Members

The Maine Association of Chimney Service Professionals held a Certified Chimney Professionals certification course and exam for all interested members in July. The Maine Association paid for all members who wished to attend the seminar and test to achieve their Certified Chimney Professionals (CCP) Certification

"The Motto for Maine is: Dirigo," noted Marshall Peters of Certified Chimney Professionals. "You will find this in their logo. Dirigo is Latin for 'I lead.' Doug Jones (Maine Stove & Chimney, Sanford, ME), the host provider, and other attendees who earned their CCP Certification were proud to say Maine Leads!"



Simon Sandstrom, Seth Warren, Michael Farnham, John Gray, Doug Jones, Archibald Talmage III, William Rice, Fred Leigh, Marshall Peters and Joey Bishop.

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# LYEMANCE™

# Ladders: Choices & Care

By Oregon OSHA Standards and Technical Resources

Employers, make sure a competent person has trained your employees who use ladders. Their training must cover ladder hazards, how to use ladders, ladder capacities, and OSHA's requirements for the ladders they use. A competent person is one who can identify existing and predictable hazards where employees work and who has authority to correct the hazards promptly.

## How to Select Your Ladder

Which ladder is the right one for your job? You will save time and energy and reduce your risk of injury if you know how to select the correct one. Key factors are type and style, length, duty rating, and the material from which the ladder is made.

Most extension ladders are made of wood, aluminum, or reinforced fiberglass. Wood ladders can't have more than two sections and must not exceed 60 feet. Aluminum and fiberglass ladders can have as many as three sections; however, the overall length must not exceed 72 feet. Individual sections of any extension ladder must not be longer than 30 feet. Extension ladders can be used only by one person at a time.



Ladders with defective parts, such as this broken rung, shall be removed from service.

## Determine the Duty Rating

Manufacturers give ladders duty ratings, based on the maximum weight they can safely support. The worker's weight plus the weight of any tools and materials that are carried onto the ladder must be less than the duty rating. Before you purchase a ladder, consider the maximum weight it will support. Don't subject it to a load greater than its duty rating.

Duty ratings for portable ladders:

- Special duty (IAA): 375 pounds
- Extra heavy duty (I-A): 300 pounds
- Heavy duty (I): 250 pounds
- Medium duty (II): 225 pounds
- Light duty (III): 200 pounds

## Determine the Right Material

**Wood** provides a natural feel and good insulation against heat and cold. However, untreated wood ages quickly; wood ladders need a protective coat of clear varnish (not paint) to keep the wood from drying and splitting. Also, wood ladders are heavy, particularly longer ones.

**Aluminum** ladders are lightweight and corrosion resistant. Aluminum will not crack or chip with rough handling; however, aluminum doesn't insulate well against heat and conducts electricity. Never use aluminum ladders for work near energized electrical lines.

**Fiberglass** is durable, weather resistant, and nonconductive when clean and dry. Unlike wood, fiberglass will not dry out or split and provides better insulation against heat than aluminum. How-



Be sure your ladder cannot be accidentally moved or displaced. Tying the ladder to the gutter is a handy method of securing it.

Photo by James DiCrescenzo

ever, fiberglass ladders are heavier than comparable aluminum or wood ladders and can chip or crack with improper handling.

Fiberglass ladders must be handled and maintained with more care than wood ladders. After a few years, the reinforcing fibers in fiberglass rails may become exposed, resulting in a condition known as "fiber bloom." High humidity and exposure to strong sunlight can accelerate the condition.

A blooming ladder can be conductive! Fibers that bloom can hold moisture, especially after rain showers. A blooming ladder, once damp or wet, can conduct up to half the voltage it comes in contact with, causing a conductive chain that could potentially electrocute the handler. Keep a fiberglass ladder nonconductive by maintaining it properly. Fiber bloom doesn't affect a ladder's strength but it will affect the appearance and may cause users mild discomfort if exposed fibers penetrate their skin.

Regular pressure washing and waxing with a commercial non-slip paste wax will protect the ladder and reduce the potential for fiber bloom. To keep



the ladder in top condition, periodically coat the ladder with two to three coats of acrylic lacquer with an airless sprayer.

## How to Work Safely on Your Ladder

- Read and follow the manufacturer's labels and instructions on the ladder.
- Wear shoes that have non-slip soles; make sure they are free of mud, oil, or anything else slippery.
- Climb facing the ladder. Center your body between the rails and keep your hips square to the rungs. Hold the side rails with both hands; you have a better chance of avoiding a fall if a rung or step fails.
- Hold the ladder with one hand and work with the other hand whenever possible.
- Attach light, compact tools or materials to the ladder or to yourself.

- Raise and lower heavy, awkward loads with a hand line or a hoist.
- Use extreme caution when you are pushing or pulling materials.

Is it necessary to "tie off" an extension ladder to prevent it from slipping? You don't have to tie off the ladder but you do have to ensure that the ladder cannot be accidentally moved or displaced. Tying off the top or bottom of a ladder is one way to ensure that it cannot be accidentally moved or displaced.

## How to Transport Your Ladder

When you carry a ladder, keep the front end elevated, especially around blind corners, in aisles, and through doorways. If the ladder is difficult to handle, find another person to help you.

When you transport a ladder in a truck or a trailer, make sure that it is



Store ladders on wall brackets that prevent them from sagging.

Photo by Jim Suttie & Peg Apka

properly supported parallel to the bed. Pad the support points with soft, non-abrasive material such as rubber or carpeting and tie the ladder securely to eliminate chafing and road shock.

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## How to Inspect and Maintain Your Ladder

Neglected ladders quickly become unsafe ladders: Step bolts loosen, sockets and other joints work loose, and eventually the ladder becomes unstable. Periodic maintenance extends a ladder's life and saves replacement costs. Maintenance includes regular inspection, repairing damage, and tightening step bolts and other fastenings.

Inspect your ladder each time you use it. (A competent person must periodically inspect ladders for defects and after any occurrence that could make them unsafe.) If the ladder is damaged, it must be removed from service until repaired or replaced.

- Replace lower steps on wooden ladders when one-fourth of the step surface is worn away. Typically, the center of a step receives the most

wear. Mineral abrasive or other skid-resistant material reduces wear.

- Don't paint wood ladders; paint conceals defects.
- Clean and lightly lubricate moving parts such as spreader bars, hinges, locks, and pulleys.
- Inspect and replace damaged or worn components and labels according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Inspect the rails of fiberglass ladders for weathering, fiber bloom, and cracks.
- Keep the ladder away from heat sources and corrosive materials.
- Ensure that anti-slip footings are in place.

- Use a well-ventilated storage area.
- Store wood and fiberglass ladders away from excessive moisture, heat, and sunlight.
- Keep them away from stoves, steam pipes, or radiators.
- Store non-self-supporting ladders in flat racks or on wall brackets that will prevent them from sagging. Store stepladders vertically, in a closed position, to reduce the risk of sagging or twisting.
- Secure ladders so that they won't tip over if they are struck.
- Keep material off ladders while they are stored.

## How to Store Your Ladder

You may extend a ladder's life by storing it properly:

*Excerpted from "Portable Ladders: How to Use Them So They Won't Let You Down" by Oregon OSHA. Used by permission.*



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## The Home Depot to Acquire Interline Brands & Copperfield

The Home Depot®, the world's largest home improvement retailer, announced on July 21 its pending acquisition of Interline Brands, Inc., parent company of Copperfield Chimney Supply. Interline Brands is a leading national distributor and direct marketer of broad-line maintenance, repair and operations (MRO) products.

In addition to Copperfield Chimney Supply, Interline's companies include SupplyWorks, Wilmar, Maintenance USA, Barnett Pro Contractor Supplies, Hardware Express, U.S. Lock and Leran Gas Products. Interline is currently owned by Goldman Sachs Capital Partners, P2 Capital Partners, LLC and management.

"Addressing the needs of our Pro customers is a top priority for The Home Depot," said Craig Menear, chairman, CEO and president of The Home Depot. "Interline is a well-run company that has achieved impressive financial results over the last few years. With their seasoned leadership team, we will enhance our ability to serve the Pro – both in the store and at any desired location outside of the

store – driving significant value for our customers and shareholders."

Interline brings to The Home Depot an experienced outside sales force, fulfillment capabilities in the residential MRO market, and an extensive distribution network of more than 90 locations throughout the U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico.

"We're thrilled for our customers and employees that Interline Brands and The Home Depot have agreed to join forces," said Michael Grebe, chairman & CEO of Interline. "We're confident they all will benefit from this next exciting stage in our company's history."

Copperfield Chimney Supply declined to comment at this time. "We will have a more official announcement about the acquisition when the sale goes through in November," said Mandy Mellum, Copperfield's Marketing Communications Specialist.

Under the terms of the agreement, The Home Depot will acquire Interline for \$1.625 billion in cash, subject to customary adjustments. The acquisition, which has been approved by the shareholders of Interline, is expected to be completed during The Home Depot's fiscal third quarter, which ends on November 1, 2015. The deal is subject to applicable regulatory approval and other customary closing conditions. 



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# The White Album

By Rob Lindemann  
Lindemann Chimney Co.

I recently attended an event where a guy asked this question: “What is the best record album of all time?” Although I have a ton of favorite music from all sorts of genres, this was my answer. Obviously, this is a debatable point and everyone has a favorite but there will be one thing in common to everyone’s answer. The album will have about 10-15 songs. In my case, I picked a “double album” with some short songs like “Wild Honey Pie,” but on average, an album has 12.26 songs. Why?

I was born in 1972, so the answer seems simple: You could only fit 5-6 songs on one side of an LP record. The album consisted of an “A” side and a “B” side. Some albums should have only recorded one side; others I wish would have gone for the “triple album.”

Now in 2015, you can go to iTunes and still buy an album of 12 songs and download it to your digital device. You can now buy one song if you choose, but the artist’s work is still boxed into albums that consist of roughly 12 songs.

Back when vinyl was the medium, the only real way to “catch a groove” was to go to the record store and buy a record. In order for this to happen, the

artist had to record the album in a very expensive studio reserved for only true stars. Once the grooves were cut, another expensive process took place. Printing and packaging the album was extremely costly for a record label to do. This involved artists, photographers and designers. When this was all said and done they still had to distribute the records — another very costly expense. It is no surprise they hardly ever left the “B” side blank.

Today, you can play, record, photograph, design, market, distribute and sell your album with only a laptop. Nevertheless, you will probably record an album with about 12 songs!

The crazy part is the LP wasn’t even the start. It was Thomas Edison’s Phonograph in 1877 that started it all. Shortly later the invention was marketed as the Gramophone that had changeable records. Over a decade later, we had portable record tables or turntables, and then things got interesting.

Records turned into 8-tracks. 8-tracks turned into cassettes. Cassettes turned into CDs. CDs turned into digital downloads. Digital downloads turned into streaming, but one thing re-

mains the same: an album still has about 12 songs.

## A Reason to Do It that Way or Stuck in a Rut?

In business, it is far too easy to do things how they have always been done. It shows up often in our trade.

Sadly, a local business that we bought ladders from for decades went out of business this year. I was reminiscing with my dad over email about how long we bought ladders there. Here is what he had to say:

*“Thanks. It’s both sad and tough to see them going under. BTW, while I’m not sure, my best guess is I probably got my first 28’ Werner type 2 ladder more than 40 years ago. I started using ladders in 1969 and probably got my first “real ladder” from them shortly thereafter. Knabe was just remembering how he had helped me with my first big job at Don Horwitz’s house on Sheridan Road when my first new 40-footer came up about two feet short of the gutter line over the sunken drive way.”*

Nearly forty years later and hundreds of Werner type 2 ladders later, Lindemann Chimney Service still op-

erated with trucks carrying a 28-foot ladder alongside a 40-foot ladder. Why? The answer had nothing to do with the height of the homes or the load we needed to carry. It had everything to do with a purchase made in 1969. Thank God, my dad didn't need the 60-footer for the Don Horwitz job!

Then one day someone came in and asked if they could buy a 32' ladder for their truck instead of a 28' ladder. I remember thinking, "No way!" I remember my dad teaching me how to take the 28' off the truck, grab the third rung, lean it onto my shoulder, and in perfect balance carry the 28' with ease. It was like a right of passage carrying a "man's ladder" to do a "man's job." The 28-foot was the only way to go.

But the guy carried on, saying that every day his ladder comes up a couple feet short. He said the ladder extends only a couple inches over the gutter and he feels unsafe. It is a pain in the butt to get the 40-footer out every time. Why not just get a 32-foot? It's just as easy to carry. Then he said something even crazier. Why not go with a Type 3 ladder? He is only 160 pounds and using it for gutter cleaning. I could hear the words in my head going, "Type 2 is a real ladder, not a homeowner ladder; it's professional grade!"

## Examine Your Habits

In what ways are you cutting 12 track albums in your business right now? It's

often hard to read the label when you're in the jar. Most times, you need someone to "walk in dumb." Someone who has no preconceptions or legacy baggage to ask the simple and obvious questions that have been stifled by habit and custom for decades. This is where true innovation lies.

Who in your company is doing this? Who in our industry is doing this? Find those people and ask them to take a look at how you are doing things. There are likely some big wins that are easy to implement, but you may be blind to see things any other way.

Find someone, preferably outside our industry, to look at how you do things. You can probably get someone to do it for free. You can offer to do the same for their business. This exercise will likely uncover some "Aha" moments if you are open minded to listening and change. It is hard to see the forest because of the trees sometimes, but try you must as this is where real innovation and change lies.

For years, we carried two-foot clay tiles up to the top of the chimneys. We used them to replace the top tile or make a better mount for a top-sealing damper. Then one day we "innovated" and started cutting them. Apparently this could be done with grinders that we had. This way we avoided carrying a heavy tile up to the chimney and prevented it from sticking too far above the crown and looking goofy. This innovation led to

years of clay dust clouds laying waste to entire neighborhoods as we cut a single 13x13 tile.

Then we got smart. We got our two masons in for one whole day. We gassed up some giant chop saws and they went at it, cutting skids and skids of tiles. The 17x17 were cut in thirds and the rest in half. We figured we would lay waste to the county once a year versus annoying our customers daily. Our masons' backs looked like the letter "s" when they were done, but in a week or so, they were back laying brick and life was easier for a whole year.

About once a week, we tour a sweep company through our building, showing them how we do things as part of our free coaching to customers. I run most of the tours. I proudly show off our neatly stacked one-foot tiles. Many people ask if they can buy them. Everyone who has carried a 17x17 up a ladder drools at the sight of one cut in a third. It was one of my favorite parts of the tour when people said, "Wow, I never thought of that."

Then one day a sweep from Minnesota came in. I showed off my pile of neatly cut and stacked tile and he replied, "That's insane. Why in the world wouldn't you just buy them in one-foot sections to begin with?!" You know the rest of the story.



## Upcoming Events

Information subject to change. Please confirm dates and locations of any events!

**Sept 9-13: South Carolina Chimney Sweep Guild** annual Gathering, Lake Murray, SC. Seminars, hands-on training, sweeps auction, stump hunt & gourmet food. Call Herb Fulmer at 803-364-0962 for more info.

**Sept 28- Oct 2: CSIA National Chimney Sweep Training School**, Plainfield, IN. CSIA Technology Center, 2155 Commercial Dr. Call CSIA at 317-837-5362 or visit [www.csia.org](http://www.csia.org) for more info.

**Oct 15-16: CSIA Inspection and Report Writing course**, Plainfield, IN. CSIA Technology Center, 2155 Commercial Dr. Our instructors will concentrate on helping you create systems for doing inspections so all members of your company will be able to perform inspections as you the owner would do. You will leave with scripted paragraphs that you create to define common defects you see in the field. Call CSIA at 317-837-5362 or visit [www.csia.org](http://www.csia.org) for more info.

**Nov 5-6: CSIA Certified Dryer Exhaust Technician Review & Exams**, Plainfield, IN. CSIA Technology Center, 2155 Commercial Dr. Call CSIA at 317-837-5362 or visit [www.csia.org](http://www.csia.org) for more info.

**Nov 13: CSIA Certified Chimney Sweep Review & Exams**, Plainfield, IN. CSIA Technology Center, 2155 Commercial Dr. Call CSIA at 317-837-5362 or visit [www.csia.org](http://www.csia.org) for more info.

## 2016

**Jan 24-27: Lindemann University** San Juan, Puerto Rico. Call Lindemann Chimney Supply at 800-722-7230 or visit [www.LindemannU.com](http://www.LindemannU.com) for more info.

**Feb 24-27: National Chimney Sweep Guild**, Orlando, FL. Rosen Plaza Hotel, 9700 International Dr, 1-800-367-8258 and ask for the NCSG room rate. Call NCSG at 317-837-1500 for more info.

**Mar 7-9: NADCA** annual meeting and exposition, Phoenix, AZ. Call NADCA at 856-380-6810 or visit [www.nadca.com](http://www.nadca.com) for more info.

**Mar 16-19: Hearth, Patio & Barbecue EXPO**, New Orleans, LA. Ernest N. Morial Convention Center. Call HPBA at 703-522-0086 for more info.

**Apr 28-30: Pennsylvania Guild of Professional Chimney Sweeps** annual Charity Workshop. For more info contact Bill Thornton, 215-540-9787.

**Apr 28-May 1: Oregon Chimney Sweeps Association Inc** annual May Day conference, Klamath Falls, OR. **Shilo Inn**, 2500 Almond St, 541-885-7980. All sweeps from the Pacific Northwest, California and around the world are invited! Call Jim Gillam at 541-882-5196 for more info.

**July 29-31: New York State Chimney Sweep Guild, Ltd. annual Summer Workshop**, Galway, NY. Chris & Ingrid Prior's hacienda. Hands-on masonry, food, fun, fire, friendship, the fabulous Sootprints!

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## Unclassified Ads

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**California Dreamin'!** For Sale: Great opportunity, successful chimney sweep company in Northern California's Tri-Valley wine country, only 45 minutes east of San Francisco. [www.keeperofthechimneys.com](http://www.keeperofthechimneys.com)

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