

Is the Past Really the Past?

By George Porter

Recently my computer got sick and the “doctor” said it was so full of worms, viruses, Trojans, and spyware that he had to drain the thing and load all the programs again. Actually, he loaded all the main operating programs, I had to take all the “ingredients” of all the programs like articles or letters and put them back wherever they should go. In the process of doing this I came across an article written in March 1993. Ten years later and seminars still go just like this sometimes. I have many more pictures and use a computer presentation with lots of examples, but the resistance is still there, some folks are stuck in the trailer business and just don’t want to get into the housing business I guess. There are not many of these people left, but it doesn’t take many to chase away the banks. (and apparently keep them away) Read this ten year old article and ask yourself if you know anyone who still thinks this way?

HOWMUCH IS ENOUGH?

Sometimes during the course of set-up seminars, I get asked questions by installers like: How come I'm recommending that they see there is site preparation AND they see there are the right kinds of anchors according to the book AND that they see to it that the factory manual is followed AND I'm really giving them a lot to do AND they just don't have time for all that. They tell me that they've got one day to set a home and they've got to get it done and do another one tomorrow. And in the case of single-wides, there may be two or three in one day. My usual response to that question is: What would happen if you went to go see the doctor with a pain in your lower abdomen. He takes one look at you and he says "Well, you've got appendicitis. Hop up here on my desk and I'll carve that sucker out." You would instantly say, "Hey, wait a minute. What about some preparation and what about some tests and what about a hospital room and anesthesia?" And the doctor replied to you he didn't have time for all that mess. He is a surgeon and all he does is cut. Now if you want your appendix out, get on the desk, and if you don't, get out of his way, he's got another customer.

You'd have to be a little bit crazy to put up with a doctor that talked like this, because if he went ahead and carved you up on his desk and removed your appendix, you would probably have some serious problems. However, he would remove your appendix. When you go to the doctor, you expect to be taken care of. You expect that all the things it takes to make the whole thing work will happen. You don't have to ask for an anesthesiologist to put you to sleep when you have your appendix ripped out and you don't have to ask that it be done in an operating room and that they actually sterilize the instruments. You assume all that's going on because you're going to a person who knows what he's doing and he's going to take care of you.

I would suggest the installation of housing is somewhat similar. Many times in the past, all we've done is cut and our patient/customer has suffered for it. If you tell a customer, "Look, if you want your lot graded, go ahead and grade it, but I don't do grading, I block homes, so if you want your home blocked, I'll be glad to do that, but I haven't got time for all the rest of it." I would suggest you're acting very much like that doctor who wants to rip out your appendix on his desk. Most people know enough about medicine to know that's certainly not the way you do it. And if you didn't know that much, you would sure know something was wrong when he started cutting you

open without an anesthesiologist.

Far fewer home buyers realize the importance of the details needed to create for them a safe, comfortable, attractive investment in housing. Many home buyers, in fact, believe that once you have a roof over your head, all the rest of the stuff they try to sell you is just simply more profit for the dealer. This impression may have been created by visiting some sales organizations that have convinced them they can buy the same home for less if they don't spend all that extra money on anchoring, site preparation and the like.

In this day and age, it's kind of surprising that there are still lots of folks selling these things like they were travel trailers—just simply cash and carry. I think in 1993 we are selling homes and it should be treated like a home. When you buy a house from a conventional home builder, it may not have bushes and a lawn, but it will have drainage and utilities will probably be hooked up and running. The home itself will be built on a foundation to which the sills are bolted and there is considerable consultation between the builder and the homeowner, both before, during and after the house is completed to be absolutely certain that the home buyer understands what is absolutely necessary and what can be considered an option. Anything related to the health, safety, welfare and the security of the homeowner's investment is necessary and that's how much is enough.

Any time we cause the creation of a home without these ingredients, we are perpetuating trailer mentality and cutting our own throats at the same time.