

Future engineers need to think of quality

I received a call from Jerry Tomkins, the assistant dean of engineering at Wayne State University, asking me to speak to students about ethics in engineering. This isn't an opportunity that comes around all that often, so I jumped on it with both feet. I thought you might like to hear some of what I had to say to the future engineers of products that we consumers will use someday.

I asked them all to stand up and be recognized by whatever company they will go to work for. I suggested that they work around the politics or corporate struc-

ture and demand that the quality they design for products stays in them. To use pride as a key word, which could only create respect amongst their peers for the long life that consumers expect from a product.

I talked about the appliance industry at length and described some of the horror stories related to me from the area's home repair. In all of the many lectures and seminars, I've done over the years, this is one of the most rewarding.

Here was a group of students who may someday fix what I've been complaining about for years: the lack of quality today compared to yesterday. I felt that I just might be making a dent in all of it.

The last few weekends I've been broadcasting live from different home improvement shows, and I will be doing so almost every weekend until the

end of April. I'll be available for you to come on over and say hello. So many of you say thanks for the column, and it makes me feel good for writing it. This paper has taught me something about the word class.

They had to pound it into my head that this column isn't an advertising forum. I don't bill my name, and neither do the companies I call, but instead be informative and direct and give people something of substance. Let them learn from what you write and become smarter consumers.

I am so very proud of the high standards that are set by the bosses who make this paper what it is. They are also like engineers in the way they design things, and so many times they get little credit except for their own sales of self-pride. I wish you would take a little time someday and

drop a note of thanks to any editor of this paper. You don't realize what a lift it would be for someone.

As for me, I get a big kick out of you readers who come up to me at these home shows or elsewhere in public and say "Thank you for helping me do it myself." I changed the vent line myself. I fixed the ice maker. I did this or that and saved a whole bunch of money because I read your column or listen to you on radio. This is what makes it all worthwhile for me. You, the American consumer, are smarter today than ever before. I believe that the future is in the hands of many of these students I spoke to. Stay tuned.

Joe Gagnon can now be heard on 810 WJZ and 103.7 WZZM. He is a member and past president of the Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals. His phone number is (248) 455-7291.

HOME CALENDAR

Grand opening
CoCo Interiors, a new home furnishings store in Orchard Lake, will have a grand opening for the public 4-8 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 20. The store is in the Village Plaza shopping center at 4111 Orchard Lake Road, just south of Pontiac Trail. Call (248) 855-6080.
Owned by interior designer and West Bloomfield resident Brian Hayes, CoCo Interiors offers elegant, classic furniture and hand-painted pieces, as well as high-end home accents and gifts, including Boehm porcelain and collectibles by Fabergé. In Michigan, the Boehm line is exclusive to CoCo Interiors.
During the grand opening celebration, visitors can leisurely browse the shop's wares while enjoying food and refreshments provided by Cucina Leone of Birmingham. Patrons can also enter a drawing to win a limited edition Americana Rose porcelain by Boehm valued at \$300.
To commemorate the grand opening, CoCo Interiors will donate 10 percent of the week's profits to Suite Dreams, a Rochester Hills-based charity that benefits terminally ill children.

Admission is \$6 regular, \$5 with any ads or listings of the event, free for ages 12 and younger. One paid admission is good for all three show days. Parking is free. Shipping services and dining will be available.
Now in its 23rd season, the exposition will feature a diverse selection of fine American, European, Oriental and African antiques and fine art. Antiques merchants from across the country, noted authors and nationally known experts will exhibit and sell their collections.
For more information, call (586) 469-1706 or e-mail mandarin@sol.com.

Architecture
William Massie, associate professor of architecture at Renaissance Polytechnic Institute, will speak in the Architecture series Thursday, Feb. 27, at Lawrence Technological University in Southfield. Massie's lecture, Data Space, will take place 7:30 p.m. in the Architecture Auditorium at the university, 21000 W. 10 Mile. Admission is free.
Refreshments will be served after the talk. For more information, call Michelle Juras at (248) 204-2880.

Quilting
Learn quilting from start to finish with basic square design and progress to more difficult patterns in a six-week class beginning Thursday, March 6, at the Rochester Community House, 816 Ludlow. Fee is \$60.
File registration is required, by mail or at RCH (no credit cards).
For information, call (248) 651-0622 or visit www.rochestercommunityhouse.org.

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