

## Someday I May Learn to Read Directions

*By Hap Hansen*

Do-it-yourself projects can be a lot of fun. They can also be rewarding. The process of building something, or creating something out of raw materials is a satisfying experience. It can also be a very frustrating experience. As an example, I used to have a garage full of half-done bird feeders, pot holders, flower baskets and model airplanes, plus several other unfinished items that I can't remember what they were going to be if I ever got around to finishing them.

Someday, I may remember! I'm not very patient when problems arise over construction patterns. There always seems to be a basic disagreement between the way I think something should be built and the way the expert designed it. I'm also not very good about reading the directions that usually accompany a do-it-yourself project kit. It just seems to be more fun to try to outwit whoever wrote the directions by taking seemingly intelligent shortcuts to get to the finished product. Have I ever succeed in finishing a project without directions? No! Will I keep trying? Yes! Will I continue to collect unfinished projects and keep stuffing them in my garage? Yes and Yes! Someday, I may learn to read directions.

Those small projects, however, pale in comparison to the really big stuff I've tried on my own in days gone by. Finishing a basement office, adding a bedroom, installing a sink, stool and shower, or wiring a new ceiling fixture seems to be something that I enjoy doing. The unfortunate part is, I'm not very good at it. But that hasn't stopped me yet from attempting projects with do-it-yourself instructions that I do not read or follow. I just know there is a simpler way. And by gosh, someday I will find it, assuming I don't drown or get electrocuted in the process! I hope that someday, I will learn to read directions.

I also have great difficulty envisioning how something is going to look when it is completed. As an example, that is why I am always cutting connecting two-by-fours too short, because I couldn't quite see in my mind that the connecting piece had to go on the outside of a project rather than the inside. As a result, I have always had a huge pile of unused lumber that had been sawed too short and is not usable. It makes for very expensive firewood. Someday, if I ever have a fireplace, that new unused lumber will come in handy.

It is time to face the facts. Not today but maybe someday. As much as I look forward to do-it-yourself projects, I'm going to let the experts take over. Someday, I will call the local plumber, electrician or carpenter when I want to build something. Then I can look over their shoulders and tell them how to take some marvelous shortcuts to finishing projects. Maybe not today, but someday.

