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DUCT TAPE or DUCK TAPE?

Written By: Harry Gribnitz

An Unofficial History

Last week I was driving into work listening to the radio. The newscaster was providing an update on the status of the space shuttle Discovery. Astronauts Piers Sellers and Mike Fossum were preparing for their third spacewalk of the mission. Astronaut Sellers had to fix a safety-jet backpack that had come loose from his spacesuit while repairing the international space station. He made the repairs by using the "ultimate tool and repair kit", duct tape. This was not the first time astronauts had used duct tape to save a mission. In fact, duct tape is one of the first items packed for every space launch since American's first ventured into space. In December 1972, Apollo 17 astronauts Harrison Schmitt and Eugene Cernan used a spare map and duct tape to build a dust fender on the lunar rover to keep dust away from their equipment as they traveled the lunar surface. You probably remember the roll duct tape played in the homemade repairs to Apollo 13 that saved the astronauts from disaster in 1970. If you don't remember, rent the movie, it is a classic with Tom Hanks. I started thinking about what other miraculous uses could be found for duct tape.

But I am getting ahead of my story. I promised you a short history of duct/duck tape. There was a time in human history before duct tape. It was a time of struggle when tape was clear and weak, things that broke, stayed broken. During World War II a need was seen for a strong, flexible, durable, waterproof tape that could seal containers, repair cracked windows, repair trucks, patch uniforms and even repair guns. A division of Johnson and Johnson Company came to the rescue. Starting with medical tape they added polycoat adhesives (for the unshakable stick) and polyethylene coating to allow lamination to cloth backing (to provide extreme strength and flexibility). The soldiers loved it. It was nicknamed "Duck Tape" for its ability to repel water.

After the war the tape was put to many civilian uses such as holding ducts together. During the post war building boom, the tape changed from army green tape to the now familiar gray duct tape. But our history does not end here. Jack Kahl, CEO of Manco, Inc (later became part of the Henkel) changed the name to Duck brand duct tape. He also recruited a very smart duck, Manco T. Duck to serve as "spokesduck" and lend his likeness to the Duck Tape Logo.

So, whether you call it Duct Tape or Duck Tape, you are using the "Ultimate Power Tool"!!!! I have used the marvelous tape to repair a tent, hang signs, mend clothing, and repair softball gloves, bats and uniforms. Right now as I type, a small piece of the wondrous tape is keeping my power cord attached to my laptop.

Time for a contest!!!! I am interested in what uses you have found for the ultimate tool. Please send me a note, e-mail or picture of your favorite or moist unique use for the tape. Entry deadline is August 17, 2006. The best entries (as judged by the official judging committee) will be awarded a prize. Do I even need to mention that the prizes will be rolls of official Duck Brand Duct Tape?

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Thanks,

Harry Gribnitz

Your Home Loan Specialist for Life!

PS: Please remember Friday, August 4, 2006 as Random Acts of Duck Tape Day. Carry your trusty roll everywhere you go and help people in need of some adhesive assistance. Also, Thursday August 17, 2006 is World Duck Tape Day. Let's all stick together!

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MY FAVORITE OR UNIQUE USE FOR DUCK TAPE

Name: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Daytime Phone: _____

Story (attach or draw a picture if you like): The use of this form is not required. Just supply the required information. Creativity counts!!!!!! To be included in the contest for prizes, entry must be received by August 17, 2006 (World Duck Tape Day).