



# SCANTLINGS

Magazine of the Timber Framers Guild  
Retrospective edition ∞ October 2021



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Number 228

October 2021

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*Scantlings*, the member magazine of the Timber Framers Guild, is typically published in January/February, April, May, July/August, October, and November. Content deadline for next issue: October 15.

### On the cover

Peg maker. Photo by Daniel Girard.

### Back cover

A few of the "Class of 2021" at the Heartwood School.

Photos by Daniel Girard.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Building a better future

#### BO FOARD

We are building a better future together. For nearly four decades, the Timber Framers Guild has uplifted and empowered communities and individuals through timber framing. In the process of creating unique public structures for towns and non-profits across North America and beyond, the Guild has taught novice and experienced timber framers alike, inspiring pursuit of a trade unique in construction and opening doors to opportunities for skilled craftspeople.

If the past two years have taught us nothing else, we have learned—as individuals and an organization—to be adaptable and resilient, even in the face of outsized external challenges. The Guild has risen to the occasion, continuing and even expanding its work in craft education during these tumultuous times. We have had to innovate, stretch our thinking, and find new ways of teaching, learning, and connecting. Through it all, our members have offered their humor, empathy, kindness, and understanding.

Our mission, "Enriching Community Through Craft," continues to drive both our daily and our aspirational work. Though *Scantlings* has been on hiatus this past year, our small staff has not; with limited in-person gatherings, it quickly became priority number one to help members connect and continue to share their knowledge together.

While many of our gatherings were virtual, and our online community discussion group really took off and expanded, welcoming timber frame enthusiasts from across the world, we were able to operate the Heartwood School and undertake Community Building Workshops in the past 18 months. 2020 was our first year operating Heartwood, and though the number of courses were reduced and we had fewer students than normal, we learned valuable lessons and developed outstanding safety and hygiene protocols that we were able to carry over to our Community Building Workshops and now to other gatherings. Will Beemer's guidance was invaluable as we navigated the 2020 Heartwood season, and the support from our members, many of whom provided insight and advice in the development of the new hygiene protocols, was inspiring and helped us move forward.

We launched SepTimber in 2020, in partnership with *Log & Timber Home Living* magazine, highlighting the stories of timber framing and celebrating our community. Though we weren't able to celebrate in quite the way we had planned, we touched thousands with our stories of community and craft.

Our members are at the heart of every timber frame, every gathering, and every story. We are truly a people-powered organization and community, and I welcome you to explore this very special issue of *Scantlings*, a retrospective of the last two years. Some stories you'll recognize from previous issues, some are synopsized and we hope will stir you to revisit the originals, and some are new stories, of the people and craft we all hold dear.

I hope the stories, in words and imagery, will inspire you as we continue on this journey together as a Guild.





Sunrise Mill Community Building Workshop, 2019.

## FROM THE ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Hi everyone,

To say that this last year has been unusual would be an understatement. Conferences were postponed, other events were either delayed or canceled, but despite a quarantine that went on for months, the Guild is alive and well. We have created community events, both virtual and in-person, for our members.

As you all know we are in an administrative transition. I would like to thank Mack Magee for his time as Executive Director. I am serving as the Acting Executive Director as the Guild board reviews the managerial plan and develops details for an Executive Director search. We'd like to hear feedback. We recognize the Guild has changed over the years. We want to make sure we're keeping up with the times and are aware of what the Guild needs and our members want.

In the meantime, the Guild will continue to provide events and opportunities to educate folks about the craft of timber framing. We will keep you updated as the plans develop. Please feel free to call or email me with questions, ideas, thoughts, or suggestions.

—Brenda Baker, Acting Executive Director  
brenda@tfguild.org, 517-403-6760



Photos by Daniel Girard



# COMMUNITY BUILDING WORKSHOPS PROGRAM

**For nearly four decades**, the Timber Framers Guild has worked with communities across the continent to bring community gathering spaces, farmers markets, memorials, amphitheaters, and more to life. Whether destinations for visitors and residents, or the heart of a community, these Community Building Workshops are a chance for the Guild to share the craft of timber framing and inspire community investment while building a unique and beautiful structure and providing skill development opportunities for both aspiring and accomplished timber framers.

In 2020, against the odds, we were able to bring Guild members together to build beautiful structures for communities and organizations from Washington to Tennessee. We also look back on special projects from 2019.

## Hidden Trace Farm

### Hidden Trace Farm

Workshop Managers George Morrison and Kyle Murphy, along with our instructor team, arrived in Franklin, Tennessee, at the end of October 2020, ready for the Hidden Trace Farm Community Building Workshop despite very little planning time. Given the scope of work, the team decided to prefabricate up to three bents in the week preceding the workshop to help assure that raising was completed on time.

This 2-week workshop resulted in the raising of a pavilion that measures 78½ feet, drip line to drip line, and is 111 feet long and 28 feet tall. The eight-bent frame design is comprised of over 470 southern pine timbers and glulams (for the 42-foot rafters)



Aerial view of the worksite.

Eric Morley

and over 30,000 board feet, grabbing a large volume of space with no interior posts—making it an ideal choice for a sports pavilion. The pavilion was designed by Joe Miller of Fire Tower Engineered Timber to accommodate both full-size high school basketball and volleyball courts.

Hidden Trace Farm is very near the historic Natchez Trace, which was originally a geologic ridgeline path used in prehistoric times by animals to move through their grazing range and on to the salt licks in Middle Tennessee (today's Nashville area). Improved first by indigenous people for trade and to expand their settlements, under President Thomas Jefferson it became the first road from Daniel Boone's settlement to the Mississippi River.

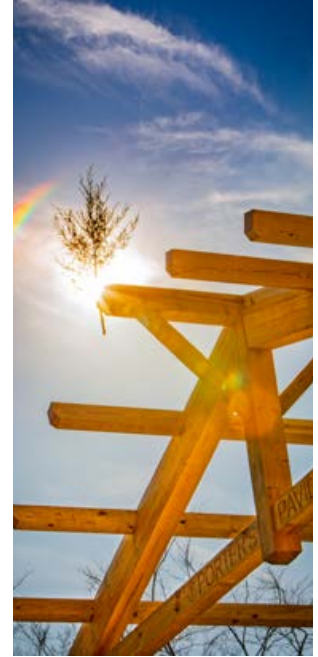
Hidden Trace Farm is a place where communities at risk in the greater Nashville area can come for a variety of activities, including recreation and fundraising. Serving Nashville youth, battered women's shelters, and veterans groups, among others, the farm is being developed further for this purpose as well as to support learning about the history of the area.

Our partner, Amy Grant, worked hard to prepare the farm in anticipation of our arrival and offered kind and welcoming hospitality for timber framers from across North America. We are proud to share the photos from this beautiful and inspiring workshop.

*For the Hidden Trace Farm project, thank you to the sponsors:*







Photos by Daniel Girard





# Community commitment

At 10:37 a.m. on Saturday, March 22, 2014, 4 miles east of Oso, Washington, a ridge over 600 feet tall was set in motion by a mild earthquake, resulting in a two-stage collapse.

Thirteen and a half million cubic yards of liquified soil raced across the north fork of the Stillaguamish River, picking up additional water and traveling at speeds up to 35 mph, inundating and severing State Route 530. The slide cut off the town of Darrington while flooding, leveling, and burying the small Steelhead Haven neighborhood, killing 43 people, destroying dozens of homes, and devastating the broader community.

Snohomish County first responders and residents, along with volunteers from across western Washington, worked in close cooperation for long days in difficult conditions searching for the missing. They combed through millions of cubic yards of mud over the entire area of the slide to locate those whose lives were ended so tragically and unexpectedly. After four months of searching, the last remains of all 43 lost souls were found and finally recovered on the anniversary of the disaster.

Hear from witnesses, survivors, and first responders in this special coverage from *The Everett (WA) Herald*, <https://bit.ly/oso-everett-herald>.

## Honoring Oso and its people

As so often happens, the strength of a close-knit community and its commitment to its fellow citizens is never so obvious as it is in their efforts to rescue those that survived, to recover those that were lost, and to support the survivors who lost family, friends, and homes. The tragedy has brought into focus the community's commitment to one another and bound them together as they worked to heal and to restore some small portion of what was lost. Memorializing those who were lost is an important step in community healing, and the Guild was honored to build two locally-designed timber frame portals as part of the memorial.

You can learn more about the Oso Memorial here: <https://www.slidememorial.com>.



Thank you to Oso Memorial Sponsors:



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## Oso Memorial Portals Community Building Workshop

In the fall of 2020, the Guild gathered at the Evergreen State Fairgrounds in Monroe and welcomed volunteers for the Oso workshop. With volunteers coming from as close as Seattle and as far away as West Virginia, Workshop Manager Bill Sturm, joined by instructors Kieran Taylor and Chris Kates, introduced the fabrication site, explained that we'd be raising the memorial portals near Oso (about 16 miles west of Darrington), and reviewed the timber frame design.





Photos by Daniel Girard except where noted

The workshop consisted of cutting the east and west portals to Oso Memorial Park along the Whitehorse Trail. The design, which included rough-sawn Douglas fir timbers as large as 10x18, turned out to be a satisfying challenge for our fifteen volunteers.

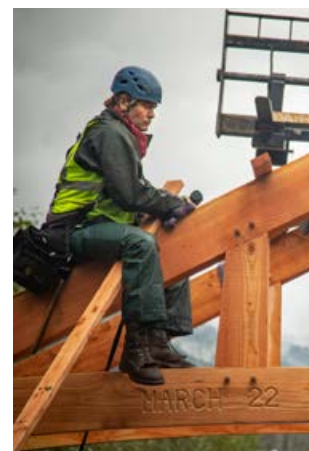
Originally intended to be mill rule, the lead team instead used square rule as well as scribing to lay out the timbers due to the six-month hiatus caused by the pandemic shutdown. This change in approach enhanced the learning experience though it increased the fabrication time. Despite this change the volunteers and lead team managed to complete the workshop a day earlier than expected. Check out this flythrough of the workshop by Daniel Girard: <https://bit.ly/oso-flythrough>.

Bill, Kieran, and Chris decided to assemble the trusses and walls and shipped them assembled. This allowed the participants to lift them directly off the trailers and install them immediately. This measure simplified the raising and reduced the time on-site which, given the waves of rain on raising day, proved to be the right thing to do. The morning raising of the west portal tested the commitment and mettle of the participants, who were rewarded with a drier afternoon which ended with the sun making a cameo appearance just as they completed the east portal.

Joining us for the raising were two special guests, Kevin Teague and Ron Thompson. Kevin was the original Snohomish County contact for this workshop, provided the initial concept for the portals, and is closely



connected to the Oso community. Ron Thompson is a community member who lost family and friends in the mudslide; he and his immediate family just avoided being caught in the slide themselves, having left for town just 20 minutes before the tragedy took their home and everything they owned. Both were moved by the portals and the participants' commitment to this work, and their gratitude remind us of why we conduct these workshops.







Copyright Charlie Duncan





# Going the extra mile

### MIKE WESTGARD

Guild experiences always seem to fill my bucket. Sometimes it is as simple as making a new friend or learning a new skill or trick. The Lake Roesiger project in spring of 2019 was different. The scale of operation was bigger than any hand cut shop I had ever heard of; it even filled a space bigger than the CNC shop at which I work.

The workshops took place at the Evergreen State Fairground in Monroe, Washington. This is where we lived, worked, ate, studied, and played. Most of us slept in tents which really added to the experience. It felt like a commune in a way, but could be better described as timber framing camp.

The shop consisted of three teams, and although we were broken into several groups there was always room to mingle and experience. The volunteers had diverse backgrounds and everyone brought much to the table. As the week progressed some of us were called away to help with the primary shelters that would be raised. It really was an all-encompassing team effort to make the project a success and everyone seemed dedicated to going the extra mile.

The evenings were filled with smiles, stories, and laughs. The Snohomish County Parks and Recreation Department provided us with three squares a day, which always included strawberries and other fruit. As for my favorite meal experience, there were some Latina women who came in for a dinner shift and cooked taco fixings with homemade tortillas made right there. They really made the workspace feel like a cantina and even had music playing!

The final push culminated with a hearty raising while some of us continued cutting for the shelter that will be raised later next year. I was so impressed with the dedication of the volunteers, selflessly staying in the shop and missing out on the actual raising. The need was there and the people rose to the needs of the project.

Exhausted, frazzled, jubilated, and awed are some of the words I would use to describe the raising party. Everyone, having given their all, finally sat down to reflect in the presence of the standing frame. I think every one of us took a moment for a long deep breath, but the experience was not over. There were still trusses to pre-assemble at the shop, tools to collect and distribute, and clean up. It is true that many hands make light work.

The time to say fair thee well was bittersweet. As we gave out hugs and handshakes, we said our adieus, but it was never framed as goodbye. We all knew there will be a next time, and we all know goodbyes are too final. We all know this is too good not to do again. Autumn Peterson described it best as "Timber Friend Therapy," and I look forward to our next opportunity to partake.

*This article originally appeared in Scantlings 222 (July 2019) as "Reflections on Lake Roesiger."*

Thank you to Lake Roesiger and Whitehorse sponsors:

Evergreen Speedway, Original Pilot House Coffee, Sky Valley Timber Products, Speedway Chevrolet & RV, Pioneer Millworks, Davies Allan, and other donors



## The power of three

On the first "official" day of the Lake Roesiger Community Building Project in Snohomish County, Washington, Workshop Manager Lon Tyler addressed the volunteers after breakfast. Lon explained that the project actually involved cutting three frames: the Lake Roesiger Park Pavilion, the Whitehorse Park Pavilion, and a small presentation stage for Kayak Point. In the first phase, the Lake Roesiger pavilion and the Kayak Point stage were to be raised, with the Whitehorse pavilion community raise to follow in 2020.

Guild timber framers and instructors broke into three groups for the three raises and started layout and timber preparation. The Lake Roesiger pavilion and Kayak Point stage were laid out using square rule and the Whitehorse pavilion used scribe rule to offer the volunteers an alternative educational opportunity.



# Raising a pavilion

Three weeks before we arrived in September 2020, the building site for the Whitehorse Park Pavilion was a wild riot of vegetation. The workshop team was a bit concerned, but we attended the general contractor's kick-off meeting with Snohomish County Parks and Recreation and were reassured that all would be ready. Less than three weeks later, the site had been cleared, the foundation installed, and the site graded for our work.

On the Monday before the raising, the team arrived at the workshops site in Monroe, Washington, to shake out timbers that had sat for 18 months under open-sided cover, fit them and adjust for the inevitable shrinkage, finish cutting half of the massive curved braces and scarfed plates, and prepare the bottom of the posts to accept the Timberlinx connectors. We delivered the timbers to the job site by the end of the week and staged them in anticipation of a midmorning start to the crane raising.

On Saturday, October 3, the Guild arrived with five instructors and fifteen volunteers to raise the frame for the pavilion on a glorious Pacific Northwest fall day. At the end of the day, the pavilion was complete and it nestled into the park beautifully. The large timber posts and braces scaled perfectly against the forested backdrop.

As always, we are grateful for a wonderful team, from our local partner, Snohomish County, to our sponsors to the excellent lead team, and, of course, our volunteer-members who make the Community Building Workshop Program possible with their contribution of time and energy.

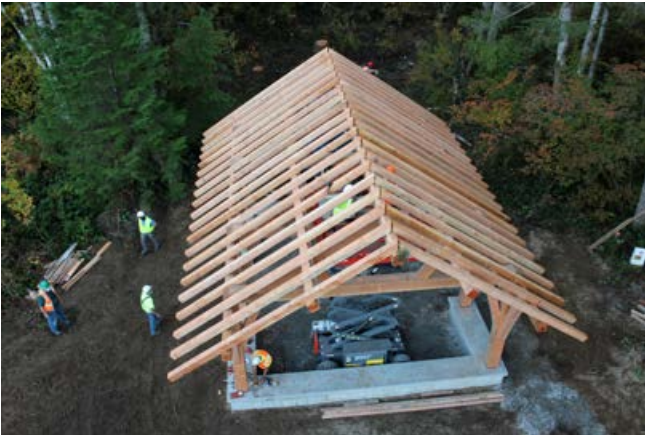
*Photos from the raising are by Bill Sturm, Autumn Peterson, Will Denton, and TFG staff.*



Thank you to Lake Roesiger and Whitehorse sponsors:









# Helping build a community's future, inspiring our own

*Note: The circumstances for this 2019 workshop at the Ekvu-Yefolecv Ecovillage were unusual for us. This inspirational group, the Maskoke, is in the process of reestablishing its community on ancestral lands. Typically, we celebrate the community that brings us in to help them build their community by building a timber frame.*

*Out of respect for their wishes, we do not share their story; they have asked that they tell their story in their own words. Therefore, we tell the story of this project, describing the work we did and those who did it.*

*Ekvu-Yefolecv (ee-gun-yee-full-lee-juh) means "returning to the Earth" as well as, in this context, "returning to the homelands."*

The first morning promised a glorious day, after much rain prior to the start of the project. After breakfast, our hosts assembled our group to ask for blessings from above and shared their story and song. We were then introduced to the smudge, a cleansing with the smoke of incense cedar burned in a pan that each of us washed over ourselves one at a time. The purpose of the smudge is to purify the spirit and to focus the mind on the work of the day.

The lead team, in preparation for the workshop, had assigned timber fabrication responsibilities and organized the participants into teams balanced with novice and experienced timber framers. There were high spirits and positive energy, as the participants engaged in timber preparation and layout work. Workshops always seem to start slowly as participants get to know each other and get familiar with the plans and the timbers to cut. This workshop was no exception to that rule, and with eight instructors and over forty volunteers, we had a large crew to get the momentum started.

Over the course of the next week, amazing things were done. For a full photo blog of the volunteer crew and the work they did, please visit [www.tfguild.org/blog](http://www.tfguild.org/blog).

The workshop had been scheduled for ten days, but the crew of 45 volunteers and 8 instructors was heavy in experienced timber framers and carpenters, all there because they were inspired by the vision of the Ecovillage. The participants applied themselves assiduously to the work at hand and churned out piles of sawdust.

Spirits, commitment, and focus remained high all week and as the weather forecast projected rain on Thursday afternoon with temperatures to drop back into the low 30s overnight, the crew outperformed expectations. The rain held off until dinner on



Thursday, after which we received 2 inches within a few hours.

But by the time the rain did come, the participants had fabricated and raised more than 95% of the frame—in only seven days. After an epic night of celebration, the crew completed the work on the eighth day around noon. Our hosts then dedicated the frame and thanked the participants in a moving ceremony that left timber framers and community members alike in tears of gratitude and happiness.

Me-doe, a Muskogee term meant to communicate appreciation for a job well done, was all that needed to be said. None of us here will ever forget what a meaningful and inspiring workshop this was, nor will we forget this beautiful community of Muskogee—beautiful and generous in spirit.

Thank you to Ekvu-Yefolecv Ecovillage project sponsors:







All photos by TFG staff





# Reflections on an ecovillage

MARCUS BRIGGS-CLOUD, OF THE MASKOKE PEOPLE

Considering that our ancient language was projected to fall silent by the year 2040, I used to believe its loss was the most critical issue Maskoke People face, and revitalizing our language was the sole work to be done to restore wellness among our People. When I awakened to the reality that language revitalization is contingent upon the interconnected elements that make a community and people, my vision and purpose transformed to one of a holistic approach to the systemic issues that have impacted Maskoke People for generations.

The journey goes something like this: I wanted to see my language survive, and went from thinking that teaching words for animals, numbers, and colors (like most community-based endangered language programs) was making an impact, to thinking that teaching Maskoke language in the Oklahoma university system was the answer, to finally realizing that I didn't even have a goal or know how to assess what success looked like. It took a little time to sort through the many band-aid options to realize that, in fact, our ancient Maskoke language was on the brink of extinction, and the only way for it to survive is to grow new, fluent speakers! I now believe this is the sole goal to which we should aspire in language revitalization work.



It might seem like growing new fluent speakers would be the foremost goal of any language program, but the reality is that such a goal is seldom established. Instead, nouns and concepts are “imported” from the dominant external language—some 3,000+ words that force us as Maskoke People to deviate from our unique traditional ethos (see sidebar). At that point, it begs the question “why not just speak English?” The answer is clear and can be exemplified in Maskoke medicinal traditions, where practitioners must sing prescribed formulas in our language and blow into plant concoctions, resulting in a healing substance consumed by members of the ceremonial community. These medicine traditions are required components of Maskoke Posketv (often referred to as Green Corn Dance) ceremonies, which renew our relationship to the natural world. Our prophecies tell us that if we cease conducting our Posketv ceremonies, our sacred fires will go out,

*Thank you:*

**rothoblaas**

Northcott Wood  
Turning



Photos by TFG staff

and Maskoke People will perish. No language means no ceremony. Ultimately, the silence of Maskoke language equals the disappearance of Maskoke People.

It was with this understanding that I started thinking more radically about a theory of change and it became apparent that we would have to recreate the society in which our language historically functioned best: for Maskoke People that is a society intimately connected to the natural world. From this consciousness emerged the vision to build an ecovillage.

Our ancestors were forcibly removed from what are known as Alabama and Georgia today to lands 700 miles away in what are known today as Oklahoma and Florida. It rapidly became evident that we needed to assemble an intentional community of like-minded Maskoke People who descended from our homelands but are products of forced removal and who wished to return to our homelands for the purpose of committing to both biophysical and ceremonial stewardship of the land our ancestors cared for over the eons. In order to see a real reversal of language loss—and cultural and community loss—we must altogether change the way we live.







Simply trying to save a language from extinction has now evolved—it is necessary to create a new society. Contemporary Maskoke society must reflect our tradition as an agrarian society in order for our language and culture to thrive: we must be able to engage in agricultural activities in a culturally competent manner. Close analysis of the Maskoke language enables us to extrapolate the worldview of our ancestors, which guides the ways in which we ought to interact with the natural world. That worldview establishes an ethic that constrains our ability to participate in the commodification of the Earth, and if we are immersed in Maskoke language and culture our community must respect this ethic. Therefore, our community had to begin thinking about how we would build our ecovillage in non-exploitative and non-extractive ways.

Cultivating a vision for a decade, and then searching and praying for the most appropriate parcel of land for another five years, Ekvñ-Yefolecv closed on 600 acres of our traditional homelands on January 12, 2018. It is an indescribable feeling to

once again reside in the world that our ancestors inhabited since time immemorial.

Our commitment to the non-commodification of the Earth and agrarian tradition demands we decolonize our thinking and practices. For example, we've made it a community imperative to decolonize our diets. With so many elder language bearers struggling with diabetes and hypertension, it became essential to work with a dietician to learn how to cook for people with chronic illnesses and tailor traditional recipes to meet their needs—we need these elders to feel well enough to share their loving guidance with our people in the language immersion program. Through this work to heal our elders and ourselves with a more traditional diet, we are learning what it means to eat “traditional foods” in an era of climate crisis: our food choices impact all Peoples’ livelihoods, which causes us to reflect on what it means when we say “vnokeckv etemocet fullêr owês” (we going about having love for one another) to extend to all Peoples, especially the most vulnerable Peoples of the planet.







We therefore operate an aquaponics system, crop agriculture, and bison ranching which are responses to the tradition of colonial commodification.

Our methods and choices in agriculture:

- address chronic illness among our elder language bearers by reintroducing healthy animal proteins that co-evolved with our genotypes since time immemorial and encouraging the consumption of fresh vegetables harvested by everyone in the ecovillage community;
- grow food in a regenerative way by utilizing a closed-lake system that does not abuse the aquifer, Holistic Management of buffalo to improve soil health through rotational grazing, and plant silvopasture for carbon sequestration and improved small scale hydrologic cycles;
- restore a threatened fish species (lake sturgeon) that is sacred to our People; and
- generate income from farmers markets and an onsite farm stand.

We have adopted timber-framing construction because it coincides with our philosophical values, such as minimal embodied energy requirements in fossil fuel consumption and carbon emissions. We are working toward a carbon-negative goal as we select timbers from on-site and perform traditional ceremony with the trees before felling, skidding, debarking, and milling the timbers with other ecovillage residents. Ekvñ-Yefolecv anticipated members of the TFG to drop in for the purpose of erecting the roundhouse and subsequently move out upon the completion of their business. We expected to be become cordially acquainted with folks throughout the workshop, but we didn't realize that the experience would yield such a genuine relationship between us and the Guild, leaving us feeling deeply saddened to see our new friends go. The workshop has forged an ongoing relationship between Ekvñ-Yefolecv and the TFG as we continue to work on more projects together. We are forever grateful to the TFG for their imprinted sustainable and aesthetically gorgeous construction contributions for the livelihood of our community.

All of the aforementioned practices, from agriculture to building to living, require a lot of work and a lot of time, but that means less time to participate in capitalist-consumerism. It is also what is necessary, in a spirit of reciprocity, to be in good relationship with the natural world. The objective is not

*Thank you:*



to return to a Clovis Indian era of living, but rather incorporate sustainability technologies that provide a good quality of living while demonstrating reverence for Earth and all living beings. To that end, we are building our community completely off-grid with solar panels, rainwater catchment, composting toilets, rocket mass heating, rocket ovens, geothermal technology, natural building construction, and small-scale biodigesters for cooking with methane gas from buffalo manure and food scraps. We are not so naive to believe that our ecovillage is somehow exempt from globalization or climate crisis, but it is just insular enough to retain our language and culture with exponentially more integrity than we've had the chance to do since we were displaced from our traditional homelands 182 years ago. We are building resilience for our grandchildren's grandchildren's grandchildren.

The entire world must learn to slow down and simplify human lifeways. Green technologies alone are not the answer; rather, they must be coupled with an entire lifestyle drawdown. Ekvñ-Yefolecv rejects capital and material accumulation and is an income-sharing community wherein residents receive a modest stipend for performing rotating duties, in addition to receiving a timber-framed tiny home for residence. We promote the concept that a community can be collectively content with living simply, fulfilled as it is by fluency in our language and the ability to live our culture daily.

We are all coming to find profound healing we did not anticipate; just being on the land is healing to our spirits as we are regularly encouraged by our ancestors' presence and know they are happy we are home. We have learned from our work so far that if one wants to revitalize Maskoke language, not only do you have to speak to children exclusively in the language (NO English) from their pre-verbal stage onward, you also have to: know how to grow beets and native pumpkins for community health (and save the seed); generate revenue from regenerative practices; clean poop from a bucket instead of wasting potable water; toast acorns you harvested on a rocket oven that required you to cut wood from the forest; mourn the loss of a sturgeon when she passes and honor the sturgeon with a song each time you harvest one to nourish an elder language bearer; cease mansplaining; quit buying frivolous plastics; turn to the sun each morning and give thanks for the day and for its energy to power your LED lights; and most importantly cultivate tons of love and compassion!

In twenty-five years, Ekvñ-Yefolecv Maskoke Ecovillage will be the only place on the entire planet where one can go to hear the Maskoke language spoken fluently. We project that in two generations, having raised children as full-time Indigenous People, Maskoke language will be the primary language spoken at Ekvñ-Yefolecv Maskoke Ecovillage. Residents will be spiritually and physically healthy persons who have inherited and continue a resilient non-extractive small-scale society in the midst of climate crisis. We will serve as a replicable archetype for other communities to implement in their own contexts, premised on a close relationship with the natural world where our unique languages and cultural lifeways thrive once again.



# Reflections on the language of Indigenous peoples

MARCUS BRIGGS-CLOUD, OF THE MASKOKE PEOPLE

My late uncle, a language speaker who lived with us, used to say “why do we hand our children over to white people to be schooled? They are our children and our responsibility to teach.” The other thing many of us used to hear from elders was the rhetoric that “you need to live with one foot in the red canoe and one foot in the white canoe.” As I matured I began questioning that mindset because it was clear to me that we instead had one little pinky-toe in the red canoe and the rest of our body in the white canoe. We now have the space to answer that first question, posed by my beloved uncle: the Ekvñ-Yefolecv Maskoke Ecovillage, a catalyst for profound transformation, is enabling us to once again be full-time Indians instead of having to schedule our time to be Indian over the weekend at a ceremony.

The Indigenous Language Institute estimates that by the year 2050, only twenty indigenous languages will still be spoken in the United States. I’ve worked in the field of language revitalization for the past two decades and encountered countless elders who have dedicated much of their lives to sharing their language but have failed to leave any fluent speakers behind. I lamented their passing intensely because they dedicated so much of their lives to revitalizing their respective languages without lasting success. It is heartbreaking to know that as elder language teachers leave this world, their shoes as fluent speakers are not being filled leading to the expected extinction of so many treasured languages and traditions.

Early on, I noticed that when I spoke my own language, it was standard practice to insert English words amid a sentence for lack of not having that particular term. However, since my elders did it, I mirrored their example—after all, it seemed inevitable to speak Maskoke with reoccurring English usage due to the remarkable amount of time we interface with the English-speaking world. As a teenager, I didn’t have access to a decolonial theoretical lens to equip me with skills to question this assimilation-promoting phenomenon; rather, I just accepted it.

Then, I began noticing that language immersion programs globally were addressing this pervasive issue of obsolescence by importing nouns and concepts from the settler-colonial society around them and crafting new words to convey those nouns and concepts. Initially, this seemed like a worthy practice, but when I started thinking more critically about this in my own Maskoke context it became clear that by the time we import into our lexicon 3,000+ words that are inherently premised on post-industrialization capitalist ideology, we’ve deviated significantly

from the unique bio-regionally-derived traditional ethos. Our ancestors left this ethos to us to nurture and continue, and to deviate so significantly would flip our Indigenous ontological worldview, which is inextricably tied to the natural world, upside-down. This understanding of the significance of our language and its relationship to our People and the natural world has inspired my life’s work and the establishment of our ecovillage.





# Return to Ekvn-Yefolecv

MACK MAGEE

In late January of 2020 the Guild's Ecovillage partner came to us with a very special request for an on-site workshop to build a community center—by March 16! They had funders responsible for significant grant funding who planned to tour the site that day, and it was important for the community of Maskoke to demonstrate significant and energetic development.

The design was developed very quickly over the next week. We ended up with a 30' x 90' three-section structure consisting of a central great room of roughly 30'x30' with a 12:12 pitched roof and two one-and-a-half story wings of 30'x30' each with 9:12 pitched roofs. One of these wings will house the arts and crafts work of the community and the other wing will be a dormitory for potential community members and visitors. Ben Loveland of MoreSun Timber Frames helped develop the design and drawings as the design changed from day-to-day. Stephen Morrison chased the impacts on the costs and the schedule and worked hard to figure out the logistics. The community specifically asked for the Guild to be involved after having so successfully built their roundhouse, but there was little time to organize another Alabama workshop in the traditional way. So, to make this happen rapidly, the Guild teamed with MoreSun to manage the workshop. Together we brought together of timber framers, all from the southeast and all involved in the first workshop, to rejoin us in early March 2020.

The team arrival on March 1, in the waning hours of a warm sunny afternoon, seemed to bode well for the workshop. However the rain, which had been falling all late winter and early spring, continued to afflict the community and chased most of the timber framers into the roundhouse. The upside was that we were dry and in a comfortable timber-framed space, where work proceeded very effectively.

After 5 days and 8 inches of rain, the weather broke and we had four days of warm sunny weather and both attitudes and productivity soared. On the fourth clear day, we pulled the crane in and the operator helped us get much of the frame in the air, including two great-room posts, which are the focal point of the structure and honor the forest from which they came.

The rain returned the next day, but our operator defied expectations and returned too. Together, he and the timber framers completed raising the main building, allowing us to believe we could complete the workshop on schedule even though the rain that fell ten of fourteen days churned the site into a muddy mess.

The last three days were spent installing the tongue and groove roof and fabricating and raising the timber for the enclosed porch. The timber framers rolled out Saturday morning after a late night and later start, leaving our Maskoke hosts with a beautiful new community center.



Photos by TFG staff







# Old ways for the new

PETER VON TIESENHAUSEN

The call in 2019 came to reconstruct the Sunrise Mill from the late 1700s using primarily hand tools. Really? Timber frame a water-driven sash mill, by hand, in oak? If you ask my wife and sons about trips we've taken around the planet, you would undoubtedly hear that I cannot pass by an open-air museum or a site where old ways are employed. Maybe I should have been born in a previous century.

While I have avoided traveling to the United States for about four years, this call could not be ignored. Quelling my trepidation, I applied and a few weeks later heard that I had been successful. I booked my flight. My first Guild project, and many questions surfaced, threatening to make me change my mind: could I afford the time, the expense, the risk of potential border crossing challenges (being a well-publicized challenger of the fossil fuel industry), would they confiscate my tools.... The list went on. And, with other commitments, it was a tight fit.

The day arrived and I got on the plane with my old hard-case Samsonite suitcase filled with 49.5 pounds of chisels, axes, and squares. Rene Allen connected for a ride share as we would both be arriving in Philadelphia late in the day. Turns out that she grew up in the woods about 140 miles north of me in northern British Columbia. Had she not resettled in Oregon she would have beat me as the most distant volunteer.

Rene alleviated many of my concerns on the drive out to Schwenksville and the Sunrise Mill project, having participated in and even led Guild projects before volunteering for this one. She also explained the use of Uber to me as we headed off into the night. Project Manager Dale Emde had waited up for us and he was kind enough to find me a blanket as I had brought only a sheet and pillow. Rudimentary accommodations in a summer camp for kids but everything necessary for survival. Crickets



All photos by Daniel Girard



and fireflies and summer heat felt foreign, having flown out of Calgary under lightly falling snow.

It was a short night with a bunch of other guys, mostly within a decade of my own 60 years, in an open bunkhouse setting, tossing and snoring on rubber-covered bunks. I took to putting an earplug in my one good ear for the duration. Apparently, my snoring was the most disconcerting of all—John said I sounded like I was dying, but I have no other proof of that.





After a hearty breakfast in the “Great Hall,” during which we explored points of view and interests beyond the soon-to-be timber frame, we assembled on the joinery site at Pennypacker Mills. Huge beams of white oak had been neatly set on dunnage and the brand-new sturdy sawhorses; to be fair, almost any oak is huge to me as the nearest naturally-occurring one couldn’t be found within a thousand miles of where I live.

A variety of skill was evident among the volunteers and I held to the middle of the range. We were led by some of the legends about whom I had only heard and read over the years, being a distant Canadian member of the Guild. Will Beemer, a larger than life hero and a Guild founder, stood with several others to lead us all in the carving of this bulky frame.

By noon we’d been cutting, bantering, and joking for some time, with friendships quickly forming. Settling to a delightful lunch on the historic site where Washington had toasted his troops, I realized that I had already added to my skills. Mostly self-taught while building my own buildings from the trees that surround my home, here I saw little tricks and tool applications to which I had never been exposed. The use of a spoke shave, for example, as demonstrated by Dave Bowman, to hog out lap joints would never have occurred to me. I thought spoke shaves were for shaving spokes.

Seth Kelley ungrudgingly trusted me with his beautiful old planes and gave direction on how to use them properly. Neil Godden led us in morning stretches or what may have looked a bit like a disorderly line dance from a distance. Forensic joinery tours by Michael Cuba and Dale Emde answered questions about historic joinery I didn’t know I had.

White oak is hard stuff compared to the pine and spruce I am accustomed to, and so much less forgiving as it doesn’t crush or bend to shape. The sauerkraut smell of the fresh timbers at least masked the odor I felt I was giving off from hand-sawing in the intense heat.

By midweek, strong bonds were forming. Only a few by Gorilla Glue or Band-Aid, most with laughter and camaraderie and collaborations on the more complicated joints.

The eight days passed like a flash for me, building and raising a sturdy frame along with the accompanying relationships felt genuine to the core. So many generous people coming together from across the continent to build a legacy that would outlive even the youngest of them. A diverse community of women and men



## About the mill

The Sunrise community build replaced the timber frame of the sash mill at Sunrise Mills in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. In a sash mill, timbers are sawed using a vertically reciprocating blade mounted in a rectangular frame resembling a window frame or sash. The original Sunrise sash mill dates back to the early 1770s and was built just after completion of the 1767 grist mill, a two-story timber frame. Both buildings are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and both mills were powered by water diverted from Swamp Creek, a tributary of Perkiomen Creek.

Historic documentation of the sash mill depicts a stout, three-bent frame of timbers of various sizes. The Guild workshop raised roughly 7,500 board feet of green oak timber. We used square rule layout on rough sawn timber, and the frame was fabricated using hand tools and traditional timber framing methods. The oak flooring, white pine siding, standard lumber skip sheathing, and cedar shingles were fabricated and installed as part of the workshop, starting with the stone-clad concrete raceway and sash mill foundations which were already in place. The flooring was laid roughly 12 feet above the waterline, thereby creating a safe work platform for the second-stage frame raising. During the workshop, Guild volunteer timber framers worked with several Montgomery County maintenance workers, who learned timber framing skills they would put to use in the future on the County’s many historic structures.

Learn more about Sunrise Mills at [montcopa.org/931/Sunrise-Mill](http://montcopa.org/931/Sunrise-Mill).

## A note of appreciation

On behalf of the Montgomery County Division of Parks, Trails, and Historic Sites, I express our sincere appreciation for the time, effort, and expertise of all of the Timber Framers Guild members, board, and management who came to Sunrise Mill to hand fabricate, assemble, and reconstruct the saw sash structure. Truly an amazing process and group of talented and dedicated people. I hope we will be able to work together again soon on the grist mill.

Regards, Ella

*Ella Aderman is the Historic Site Supervisor for both the Sunrise Mill and the Pennypacker Mill (where the Guild did the fabrication for the workshop) in Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.*





of all ages, whose politics or religions didn't always coincide but with a common goal of fostering quality craft, sharing techniques and knowledge, and building community. These people showed up on time, worked hard, and tried to make the very best building they could. The love of the wood and the craft of fitting it together seemed to bridge any differences we may have had.

In the end, the frame and the rafters were up. The hand building, which had been the attraction for me, had slowed the process enough that we were not able to completely fulfill the obligation of shingling the building as well. The sound of the handsaws, boring machines, axes, mallets and chisels, of the drawknives pulling shavings from the corners of the free riven pegs allowed for the sounds of people to mingle with the making to pervade the historic battlefield meadow we worked in, with the shavings and woodchips soft underfoot.

As I checked my now 49 and 9/10ths pound Samsonite with an autographed copy of Will Beemer's *Learn to Timber Frame*, I reflected again on my week in the States. How had it come to this? We seem to only ever hear the negative stuff. We are told that demons lurk everywhere, that we can trust no one, and that everyone is out only for themselves. However, on the Sunrise Mill project, I had met and worked with so many amazing and generous people, some of whom might still be part of my life at the end of it. All with such a willingness to guide and to teach, to learn and to share.

Even as the US airport security guard removed the 20-year-old Swiss Army knife from my carry-on he seemed to have compassion for my attachment to it; he took the time to open the Phillips screwdriver/can opener, I'm sure, appreciating its quality. He lingered there and gave me time to review my options. I imagined him trying to think of a way for me to keep it instead of deleting it forever from my pocket before I boarded my flight back to Canada.

Given the opportunity I expect I will return to the US again, perhaps to support the people of this guild and the projects they foster—for it was a truly progressive exercise—or just to spend more time with like-minded people willing to find a common way forward with energies and equity for the benefit of all life on this amazing planet.

P.S. I've got a new Victorinox huntsman coming to maintain that long sharp taper on my carpenter pencils.

*This article first appeared in Scantlings 224 (November 2019).*

Thank you





# Thanks to an extraordinary group

Friends and colleagues,

Before this workshop, if you had asked me how one should judge the success of a building project, I would have given you some phony answer that I learned in business school. I would have explained that through careful budgeting and extensive record-keeping, one could push a team to maximum efficiency and greater returns. The metrics by which we evaluate today's successes seem feeble and offensive in the shadow of what we have accomplished.

After spending the week in Montgomery County with all of you, I realize the ultimate success of a community building project cannot be measured by board-footage or square-footage, and not by production efficiency ratios or gross margin. Perhaps, our success should be gauged by lessons learned, laughter had, or skills gained; by songs sung, campfires lit, or stories told.

It is an audacious thing for a group of volunteers to build the building we did in the time we had. This is an extraordinary group by any standard and I am both humbled and honored to have been a small part of it.

Congratulations and a heartfelt and sincere thank you for all of your hard work. Keep building!

—Dale

*Dale Emde was the Guild workshop manager for the Sunrise saw mill project.*



Northcott Wood  
Turning





# A lifetime of achievement

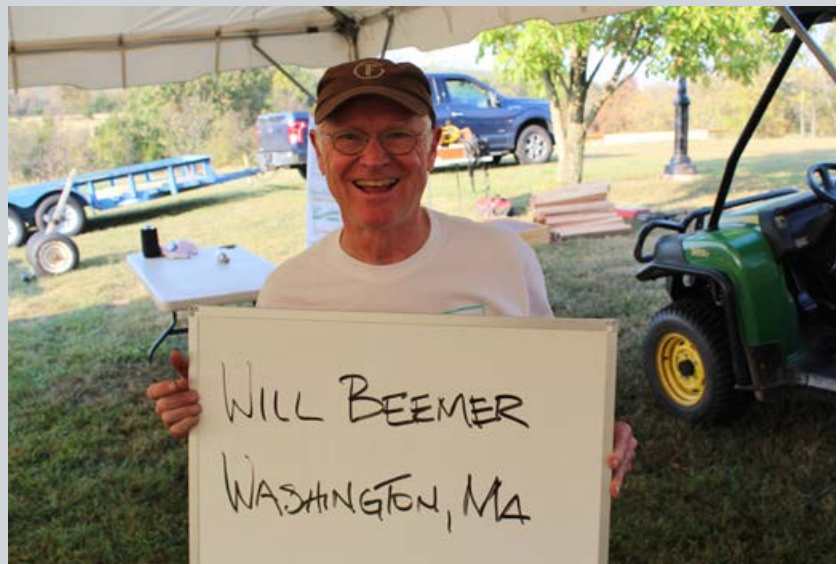


The names Will Beemer and Heartwood School are inextricably connected. For the more than 40 years that Will and Michele Beemer owned Heartwood, Will has shared his love and knowledge of craft at the Heartwood School in the heart of the Berkshire Mountains of western Massachusetts.

Under his tutelage, thousands of Heartwood students have discovered a passion for timber framing and other homebuilding crafts that they have carried on with them, whether as hobbyists or professional timber framers.

Will's commitment to timber framing and its revival in North America has extended far beyond the school grounds. As a founding member of the Timber Framers Guild, Will has fostered passion for the craft at Guild events and workshops across North America and beyond. He has served as a member of the board, the executive director, and project manager.

Will has devoted his life, skills, and wisdom to the art and science of timber framing as well as to others who also have committed themselves to the craft. The Guild is proud to bestow upon Will Beemer the Lifetime Achievement Award in honor of his dedication, commitment, and service to timber framing and the Timber Framers Guild.





# HEARTWOOD SCHOOL

**The path to financial security** and upward mobility has long been tied to education, with a prevailing expectation that earning potential is dependent upon a college education and an office job. Timber framing offers a unique opportunity to embark on a journey of lifelong learning that takes the grain of a timber as its textbook and a chisel as its pencil.

Students of timber framing engage in the craft with passion, building an expertise honed from experience and achieving financial security and respect in a community of professionals who take pride in their work and knowledge. For many, this journey begins at the Heartwood School.

## Building a future with the Heartwood School

Education has always been the primary focus of the Timber Framers Guild, and at the close of 2019, founding members Will and Michele Beemer provided us the opportunity to expand our effectiveness as an organization: as we turned the page to 2020, we did so as the new operators of the Heartwood School for the Homebuilding Crafts.

For more than 40 years, Will and Michele have provided timber framing and related educational programming at their school in Washington, Massachusetts, training hobbyists and professionals alike. Dedicated to craft and to excellence in teaching the building arts, the Heartwood School has inspired thousands to pick up a chisel and pursue timber framing professionally.

As we look ahead, we anticipate students will “learn at Heartwood, grow with the Guild” as they begin their timber framing journey at the school. With the revitalization of the Apprenticeship Training Program, we have the opportunity to integrate curriculum with the educational offerings at Heartwood, providing a through-line from Heartwood to the ATP and to the Guild. Heartwood can help us to connect all our educational programming, including our Community Building Workshops and symposia and regional gatherings more strongly. Heartwood students will have an immediate network of support as they embark upon their timber framing life.



Photos by Daniel Girard





## The 2020 season

We commenced 2020 with eager anticipation of learning the Heartwood ropes under the tutelage of Will Beemer, taking on administration of courses, supporting students, and bringing instructors to Heartwood from across New England and beyond. However, 2020 had other plans, as we all know now. Our introduction to managing Heartwood included the added challenge of travel restrictions, stringent new hygiene protocols, and scheduling changes. Through it all, Will provided thoughtful advice and direction as we navigated the strange reality of 2020 together.

In the end, despite six canceled courses due to early restrictions and scheduling conflicts, we welcomed approximately 100 students over the summer. Though the class sizes were smaller and new class protocols were in place, students fabricated and raised beautiful frames on time or ahead of schedule. Friendships were formed, opportunities discovered, and some began their journey to become professional timber framers.

We encourage you to explore the Guild's blog, which covered some courses in the 2020 season, and also to take a look back at *Scantlings* 227, which covered the first class of the season, the Timber Framing Intensive. For a wrap-up of the season, check out [Guild Notes of September 22, 2020](#), where you'll also find "Into the Woods: Converting Trees to Timber."



Photos by TFG staff unless noted



Will Beemer







Will Beemer

From the 2020 Heartwood classes, clockwise from top left: Converting Trees to Timber, Timber Framing I, Timber Framing II, Basics of Building, Basics of Building, Scribing, Earthen Bake Oven, Cruck Framing



## Heartwood 2021

The new year brought new promise, and Neil Godden (Godden Timber Frames) came to Heartwood to serve as the director of education, interviewing and selecting candidates for residency and working with the Guild's executive director to develop the season's program. In mid-spring, the team was joined by Melissa Ewald, formerly of the Shelter Institute and a timber framer in her own right, who served as administrator of Heartwood in addition to supporting the Guild's other educational initiatives, including the Community Building Workshops.

We welcome you to enjoy this look back on part of the 2021 season, through the eyes of Guild member Daniel Girard.



Photos by Daniel Girard



From the 2020 Heartwood classes: right, Converting Trees to Timber. Top, Timber Framing for Women. Above, Raising and Rigging.

## The return of pizza night

2021 residents Kestrel Thorne-Kaunelis and Beckett Mullen brought back the tradition of pizza night, and students relished the chance to get to use the earthen bake oven at Heartwood on a weekly basis.







From the 2020 Heartwood classes, this page, clockwise from top left: Stereotomy, Timber Framing with Power Tools, Timber Framing for Women, Timber Framing II, Timber Framing with Power Tools



# A new chapter for the Apprenticeship Training Program

In 2020, the TFG Education Committee convened with the express purpose of revisiting the Apprenticeship Training Program (ATP). Chair Janet Kane, a longtime advocate of the ATP, spearheaded a member survey examining the interest in the program and soliciting feedback and recommendations. Prior to conducting the survey, the Education Committee held community forums to discuss the Apprenticeship Training Program.

The first forum focused on the experiences of ATP graduates and Guild journeyworkers, the benefits of the rigorous training, and the confidence and competence graduates gained through the combination of academic and hands-on training offered by the program.



ATP graduate Jackson DuBois said the education he received as an apprentice is still valuable in his career and gave him the foundation he needed for professional growth, preparing him to become a project manager and leader in a design-build firm. He believes it fundamentally changed how he sees his relationship to his employers, and also taught him to engage and educate his colleagues.

Journeyworkers who didn't go through the ATP offered their perspectives as well. Adrian Jones of Frameworks Timber noted that like a college degree, being certified as a journeyworker changes your perception of yourself. The ATP also helps cement a culture of training and growth, making it clear that a company fosters and promotes learning.

Board member Will Denton and Rick Collins, both journeyworkers, put a high premium on trades education and have worked together over the past six years to provide opportunities for training to interested novice timber framers. And Tim Whitehouse, who was selected as a journeyworker based on his resume, shared his gratitude with the many master timber framers who took time to teach him. He shared, "the only reason I got as far as I did is because people took the time to teach me and for that I'm very grateful."

Program leader and trusted elder Curtis Milton said it filled his heart to hear the stories of support and passion for the program. He said the critical point of the program was: "I learn from others and try to make it easier for others to learn."

Will Beemer, founder of Heartwood School, noted that with the Heartwood School moving under the auspices of the Guild there may be an opportunity for the school to provide that kind of support and training required. As the Education Committee moves forward with its work in the coming months and years, the clear connection between Heartwood and the professional and educational development inherent in the ATP will strengthen as the two work hand-in-hand to build our industry and community.



## Meet the people, meet the program

Enjoy Apprenticeship Training Program discussions held in 2020 as TFGLive! events.

Apprenticeship Training Program  
Forum 1, April 2020  
<https://bit.ly/ATP-April-2020>



ATP Forum 1

Apprenticeship Training Program  
Forum 2, June 2020  
<https://bit.ly/ATP-June-2020>



ATP Forum 2



## OUR COMMUNITY: MEMBER STORIES

**Timber framing has touched** every corner of the globe in its long tradition of craft. It also touches every person who picks up a chisel or looks up in wonder at the work wrought by skilled hands.

Each structure has a story to tell, and every craftsperson in our community has one too. These stories inspire, amuse, and sometimes break our hearts. They are the stories of life, humanity, and community that connect us and strengthen our bond to one another and this craft. These are stories of and from our chosen family: this community of timber framers.

### A community's heart

ANDREA WARCHAIZER

When I moved to New Hampshire in 1990 to start my architectural internship, I knew no one. The kind folks at Benson Woodworking looked after me, invited me to all the neighborhood gatherings, and, years later, allowed me to pick through their “bone pile” to find the timbers that would become the frame of my small home on the Darby Brook.

When I started to think about building myself a home, I had nothing. My fledgling business was just beginning to take off, and I had no savings and no realistic plan for how to make it happen. However, as poor as I was according to my bank account, I was rich in my many friendships forged within the Timber Framers Guild. I hope that my house raising, attended by many Guild members and other local timber framers, was a gesture of mutual goodwill and not a charity pity party for a poor deluded single gal.

Many Guild friends showed up on raising day to help Alicia Spence and Jeff “Uncle Scruffy” McCarty raise the frame cut by Steve Amstutz, Nancy Bernstein, Mike Peabody, and a crew of Yestermorrow students. At the end of a long day, the frame and panels successfully raised and many beers and servings of roast pig gone, my heart was full with the gifts of community and camaraderie.

My Guild friends have become part of my extended family and remain so to this day. One winter I collaborated on a project with Tom and Harry Southworth of Garland Mill. We were pressed on a deadline and I told Tom I could work on the project on Christmas eve and day, as I didn't have family nearby. It's the only time I ever saw Tom look the least bit angry. “Don't ever say that,” he admonished, looking stern. “We are your family. You have family all around you. You are never alone.” He broke my heart with his kindness and care. My heart has been broken many times since, in equal measure from the continued kindness of friends and the painful loss of some of them.

These memories are strong as I close up the little house on the Darby Brook and prepare it for a new owner. Change is always difficult and the house harbors so many memories: meetings of our local TFG Liars' Club (replete with outlandish stories); visits from Heartwood apprentices and Will Beemer; and at the top of one eave plate, where I could see it every day as I brushed my teeth, signed messages of well-wishes from the timber framers who cut my frame with such earnest attention. None of these things would

have been possible without the relationships forged and tended through the Guild.

At the end of a difficult year, I count my blessings and feel so fortunate that my avocation and my vocation have become intertwined so richly.

*But yield who will to their separation,  
My object in living is to unite  
My avocation and my vocation  
As my two eyes make one in sight.  
Only where love and need are one,  
And the work is play for mortal stakes,  
Is the deed ever really done  
For heaven and the future's sakes.*

—Robert Frost

Merry Christmas and best in the new year to all my Guild family, new and old.

*Editor's note: This story originally appeared in the 2020 Christmas Eve message.*





# A timber framing legacy: Inheriting the passion

DAN MCKENZIE

My first memory of the craft of timber framing was when I was seven years old and “helping” my grandfather raise and roof a timber frame barn he was building on his farm. He took me to his workshop and showed me a picture from the 1992 Guild project of the bridge over Speed River in Guelph, Ontario, pointing out where he was located in the photo, standing at the top of the structure with over 300 craftsmen. I was in awe!

I already knew he could do amazing things as I watched him building his barn, but the bridge project was almost beyond my imagination. The following year, I walked across that bridge in Guelph with my grandfather and he explained how it was built, telling stories along the way of the friends with whom he worked on the project.

That time I spent with my grandfather growing up in his shop and around his farm had a big impact on my life. I did a carpentry co-op in high school and later attended Algonquin College in the Heritage Restoration Program. After graduation, I worked for a log home builder and did some barn restoration work before landing at Gibson Timber Frames in Perth, Ontario.

It was at Gibson that I learned of the ClearWater Farm Community Building Project. I jumped at the opportunity to be involved and was lucky enough to be chosen as an instructor on the project. It seemed surreal: there I was, twenty-six years after my grandfather’s Guelph project, working on a Guild project in Ontario! The experience was amazing. It was everything my grandfather had described and more. I met many like-minded timber framers, craftspeople, and enthusiasts, including another timber framer who had worked on the Guelph project.

On the last day of the project I took that timber framer, Brock O’Brien, up in the lift to help peg the last of the upper structure. I told him he was the only person I knew who worked

on the Guelph project with my grandfather and explained how I had inherited his passion for timber framing. I have to say it was a little emotional working side-by-side with a man who had shared this experience with my grandfather, and the connection to my past was palpable.

The building project in Georgina was an incredible experience in every way—the joy of the craft, the community of people, and this direct link to my past. This project brought so many people closer together from every walk of life, between the local community and the community of craftspeople. Working on this project with my grandfather’s tools even brought me a little bit closer to him.

*Dan McKenzie is a timber framer working in Perth, Ontario. This article originally appeared in Scantlings 219 (February 2019).*



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## Expanding horizons on Vancouver Island

WILLIS ROZYCKI

On a mild and drizzly fall morning, I caught a ferry to Vancouver Island. I made my way north toward Churchill Timberworks where my fellow timber framers, novice and expert alike, were gathering. Our host Randy Churchill was set to lead a compound joinery workshop, followed by a “raising rendezvous” at the Tribune Bay Outdoor Education Centre on Hornby Island. I didn’t know quite what to expect, but my desire to expand my knowledge of compound and irregular roof joinery inspired my trek by land and sea.

My fellow students turned out to be twelve timber framers from across the western United States (Washington, Oregon, California, and Utah) and Canada (British Columbia, Saskatchewan, and the Yukon), as well as one timber framer making the journey all the way from West Virginia! Over the next few days, we delved into the Hawkindale angles in Randy’s shop. As we grew more comfortable with the concepts,







we started applying them to the design with which we were presented: an octagonal roof frame that sat on canted round yellow cedar posts. After wrapping our heads around the design we started turning our thoughts into action. Layout and cutting started mid-week, and as complicated as the frame was there were a lot of good heads on the job to make things go smoothly.

We loaded the frame on a truck bound for Hornby Island on the evening of October 4 and, after a journey that involved two

ferry rides, we met it the following morning at the Tribune Bay Outdoor Education Centre. People came from all over to see the beautiful frame go up, and many were there to volunteer to help with the raising. Because of the complexity of the frame, the raising stretched through Canada's Thanksgiving holiday and the week that followed.

Although I did not see the frame go up in its entirety, I returned home with a smile on my face, after learning a great deal about compound roof joinery and gaining some new friends in the process.

I'd like to thank Randy Churchill for his immense hospitality, as well as his neighbors who took many of us into their homes. And I'm sorry to the pubs of Courtenay, British Columbia, for taking us in—though I'm certain we paid our tabs. Thank you also to John and the whole team at Cascade Joinery for the opportunity to expand the depth and breadth of my expertise—truly skills I can take to any project we might undertake.

## STEAM: Community support powers the course

ROB HUGHES

As a self-taught, middle-aged timber framer, I sometimes lament all those wasted years prior to finding my life's passion. How nice it would be to know what I know now, yet still be a curious, bulletproof twentysomething. Then again, I suppose there is something to be said for experience and wisdom.

Perhaps the greatest reward for me, and for many others in our community, lies in sharing the craft with others and knowing that my role as a teacher of the next generation of framers could be my greatest legacy. This is particularly critical as our industry faces the challenge of bringing young people into the trade.

Jim McLaughlin and I co-teach a class that exposes high school juniors and seniors to the cross-section of disciplines that comprise "STEAM" (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math)—and we do it through timber framing. Our class, limited to just 15 students, meets for one 40-minute period per day, five days per week, over our 40-week school year. In that time, students learn the history of timber framing, basic frame engineering, design elements, shop safety, several layout methods, how to properly use professional grade tools, all necessary joinery, and how to safely raise a frame.

We seek out community service organizations in need of a structure, meet with them to determine the footprint, dripline, and purpose of the structure. Then the students develop a design using SketchUp and go through an approval process with the host organization. Once approved, students create shop drawings and generate a materials lists and work schedule that will allow us to raise the frame in mid-May.

The hallmark of our course is problem-solving. Whenever possible, students are asked to find efficient solutions and you'd be surprised to see what they come up with. In a process we refer to as "Imagineering," students are encouraged to find new approaches that allow us to create the best frame possible. At all times, we stress a "growth mindset" and an accumulation of skills through constant problem-solving and multiple perspective-taking. Grades are based largely on effort, safety, and ingenuity.

Our district is quite proud of our unique program and we have enjoyed phenomenal support from our board of education and administrators. Collectively, we have a mission to expand young minds and develop college- and career-ready young adults. Jim and I take tremendous pride in the program we are continuing to shape, and are profoundly mindful of the faith and support of our school district as well as so many of you in the field, upon whom we have relied for ideas and suggestions (and tools and supplies as well!). This program would not have been possible without the generous support of our Guild friends and others in the timber framing community, and we welcome questions, ideas and suggestions, so please do share them.

*Read articles about Rob's STEAM program, entitled "Training the next generation" (Scantlings 217, October 2018) and "Full STEAM ahead" (Scantlings 224, November 2019).*





# Raising the barn at Whitney Farmstead

**TODD HERZOG**

Some 2 million family farms dot the American landscape and no single structure exemplifies the American farm image more than the timber frame barn. As anyone who has spent any time driving through the farmland of the Midwest has seen, the number of timber frame barns is disappearing at an alarming rate. Many collapse from neglect, but for others, modern farming equipment just does not fit inside an old timber frame barn. Couple this with the fact that traditional timber frame barn construction is expensive, and timber frame barns seem destined for extinction. The modern rural landscape is transforming into one of steel buildings.

However, the old farming tradition continues on a family farm a few miles north of Ann Arbor, Michigan. The Whitney Farmstead is now being run by the fifth generation, Malaika Whitney, with her husband Matthew Haarklou. They operate a diversified pastured livestock and maple syrup farm, and are also committed to carrying on the heritage of timber framing.

Matthew and I met at the TFG Red Mill Pavilion Community Building Project in Portland, Michigan, in August 2015. Over lunch one day, while talking about our passion for timber framing, the conversation shifted to Matthew's dreams for the farm. He and Malaika harvest maple syrup every spring and Matt envisioned a timber frame sugar house for this operation. As I live only about an hour away, I was all in on helping with the project.

The Whitney Farmstead is situated on rolling hills dotted with pastures, hay fields, and wood lots. It had been a number of years since the wood lots were last harvested, so there was adequate timber available for the sugar house. The timber was culled from standing dead and otherwise damaged or diseased trees and was a mixture of oak, ash, hickory, black walnut, and cherry. Matt milled the timbers using Malaika's uncles' Peterson sawmill, and we commenced cutting in a very cold pole barn in February 2016.



We cut the frame throughout the rest of the winter and early spring, and had a raising on a beautiful weekend in early May. In true farm timber framing fashion, the raising was a community event with three generations of family and many friends and neighbors there to assist.

Construction work slowed through the summer because, well, there's a farm to run. However, an October wedding between Matthew and Malaika loomed and the sugar house figured to be a centerpiece in the ceremony. The effort intensified and the sugar house was completed with a week to spare. The wedding took place on a beautiful Norman Rockwell-esque day, with clear blue skies and peak autumn color.

For the Whitney Farmstead, maple syrup is just one aspect of the farm's many seasons; the farm is primarily a grass-fed livestock operation with a small heritage breed dairy herd offering milk shares direct to consumers. The original milking parlor, used by previous generations, burned down decades ago, and thus far, the milking system had been temporary and inefficient. What the farm truly needed was a purpose-built structure to meet the needs of the small dairy.

While a steel building would doubtless meet the needs of the dairy, Matthew's passion for timber framing and the family's desire to preserve their traditional family farmstead required the construction of a timber frame milking parlor.

The milking parlor barn is intended to be at the heart of farmstead operations. As the farm runs a herd share and CSA program, members each have shares that they can pick up during their farm member visits. Matthew and Malaika believe that the milking parlor should show off their pride and quality farm products, so no typical timber frame would do. College friend and timber framer Ethan Higgins, who had been instrumental in building the sugar house, suggested incorporating some hand-hewn live-edge scribed timbers into the frame.

The milking parlor is a monitor style barn with three sections: milking, milk room, and farmstand with each area comprising one-third of the total structure. The visual appeal was enhanced by book-ending the milking parlor with the sugar house next to the primary pasture. From this location the cows can be brought in directly from the pasture, milked, and then turned out.



Kathy Stadtfeld



Matthew's vision was clear, making the drawings easy to develop. Cows are a bit messy and we were accounting for food production, so sanitation was critical. For this reason, the milking parlor was designed with three-foot concrete and brick stem walls, and all internal posts are elevated on concrete pillars to protect the timbers. Many silos and barns in this area are made with red ceramic glazed masonry units, and the farmstead had enough leftover from previous projects to cover the exterior of

the foundation wall, blending it in with the local architecture.

As was the case with the sugar house, there was sufficient timber available on-site to cut the majority of the required timbers. The rest were purchased from a local custom sawmill. The seven bent frame was cut over the winter and spring of 2019.

*This article originally appeared in Scantlings 223 (September 2019), where you can also see "Raising the Whitney Farmstead milking parlor."*

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## Married to a timber framer: Life on the cutting edge

PATRICE MAYNARD

It's not possible to measure out my years of marriage in raisings. There have been a lot, let's say. The glory of each raising is never exactly the same, though the glory is inevitable. It's why I'm always disappointed when I cannot attend a raising and why I am willing to travel far to get there whenever my own work allows.

While each raising is unique, the ritual leading up to it is the same: a growing quiet in my timber framer as the review of steps to be covered on raising day take up more and more time in his mind. It's increasingly unlikely that a passing question will be answered as the day of the raising draws near and the silent spaces expand.

My own work is as a Waldorf teacher and a publisher. The advantages of having married a timber framer in my line of work have been countless. Often I have wondered out loud how teachers who do not have a carpenter for a spouse ever survived. My classes got to know my husband over these years. He was a friendly man but one to be respected and revered because he was the man with the tools, the man with expertise in a real profession, a quiet man not to be trifled with. When he spoke, the children listened.

Of all his worthy undertakings with my students, the most spectacular projects were the third grade building projects. In Waldorf schools, we teach in blocks, focusing a single subject for weeks to get to real depth of understanding of a theme or topic. Then we let this go for a while to pursue depth in a different area, allowing the first to settle even deeper into a child's memory, to be raised up again when we return to it. Part of the grade three curriculum is house building, perfect for focusing young minds on the components of a project.

Mr. Maynard, the timber framer, introduced the chisels with firm appreciation, due reverence, and awe-inspiring words at how sharp these were. He shaved the hair off his arm with a slick to demonstrate. This inspired the appropriate fear-of-God and sobriety to balance the thrilling giddiness of the chance to work with a real timber framer and to use real tools.

Like all timber framing projects, there was in the preparation of the frame a lot of hard work. The project was transformative for all the children in my classes. When raising day came and their parents were present to see this miracle lifted up into a small building, the glow of pride and satisfaction on all the faces of the young builders was impressive.

The raisings in these classes were remarkable ones. Along with the uplifting of spirits that comes along with the lifting of each

brace came the additional rising of the hearts and souls of all the students. Until you've seen a raising, no matter how well it is explained, you cannot know this feeling of gladness, hope, and a deep change in breathing when the frame is steadily realized and the beauty of it stops all ordinary thinking with the greatness and loveliness of it.

Always with a timber frame there is so much more built than a building—beautiful though such a building is highly likely to be. In all the cuts of life and relationship, the wood and the framer are there to illustrate how arrestingly beautiful living things can become after cutting. One just has to get good at it, and wait for the completion of all cuts, followed by a lifting up, to see and comprehend what the cuts are really making.

*Read the full article in Scantlings 220 (April 2019).*





*Grigg and Cindy Mullen, stalwart supporters of the Guild and craft education, regularly host events to do what they love, all for the benefit of their community. In these events, participants learn skill, share skill, and grow skill, with the thoughtful guidance of the Mullens shaping and inspiring the experience.*

## The Mullens' teach building with arms wide open

LAURIE MACRAE

The Mullens have been hosting timber frame projects for more than 20 years, initiated by Col. Grigg Mullen, civil engineering professor at the Virginia Military Institute (VMI), for cadets who were not participating in the five-day field training exercises (FTX) and needed a service project for that time. The idea took off, and the annual VMI Spring FTX and VMI Fall FTX events result in a structure for local organizations, schools, parks, or communities.

Over the years, the magnitude of the projects has grown, and their ongoing success is thanks to the Mullens, who apply their arms-wide-open, can-do approach to coordinate the entire enterprise. As we know, it is about so much more than the finished structure. It is truly about community, in every aspect and angle of the project. When there in 2019, it really dawned on me that what the Mullens provide is a model for community engagement, where anyone and everyone can learn the layout process, cutting and joinery, blacksmithing, live edge work, carving, and tool sharpening. Yet the most important skills learned at these projects is how to work in and with community and the spirit that drives it all.

*Read Laurie's full article, "A different vantage point: The Mullens' school of community engagement" in Scantlings 221 (May/June 2019).*





TFG member Scott Northcott's pegs are in timber frames across North America, including thousands donated to local projects and Guild Community Building Workshops. Northcott Wood Turning is a family affair, with Scott and Judy producing millions of pegs over nearly 50 years in business, with a record topping well over 600,000 in 2006. The Northcotts have been part of the timber framing community since well before there was even a Timber Framers Guild, and their support of timber framers and the Guild have literally been integral to the success of our projects over the years.

You can read about the Northcotts and their business in *Timber Framing* 127 (March 2018) in an article entitled "Memoir of a Peg Maker." Below, we recall this story of Scott's local commitment, bringing Guild spirit to the Scouts of Walpole, New Hampshire, along with many Guild friends.



## Bringing Guild spirit to the Scouts

### SCOTT NORTHCOTT

In the spring of 2018, my oldest son Chris and I attended a committee meeting of scout leaders who oversee Hoge Base in Walpole, New Hampshire. Somewhere in the discussion, someone suggested building a pavilion. My ears perked up. In Judy's and my 40-plus years of making pegs, many have gone into beautiful public pavilions around the country. I shared some stories and photos from these projects and my great enthusiasm as I promoted the notion of a timber frame pavilion—though I had no idea how to pull it off.

However, I did know who could pull it off: timber farmers who had made, designed, worked on, and raised many pavilions in the past. A team came together quickly, comprised of familiar names and faces as well as new ones. Joel McCarty and Col. Grigg Mullen led the way, with both volunteers and pieces of wood making their

way to New Hampshire from far afield. UPS delivered struts and braces from as far away as Texas and Wyoming. Al Anderson made the trek north from Virginia, and he and my son Ben pressed Al's Alaska sawmill into service. And, while fellow Virginians Bob and Donna Smith weren't able to make the trip or cut struts, they sent the stock with Grigg, who handed over the job of cutting and laying out to Ken Rower and Dave Carter (aka the Fussy Brothers). I've heard their discussions were "spirited" but of course the finished struts were perfect and fit perfectly, and we know they had a great time. The struts now reside just below the beautifully carved eagles provided by Tim Bickford.

*Read Scott's full article, "Bringing Guild spirit to the Scouts" in Scantlings 226 (April/May 2020).*





*TFG member Steve Rundquist shared this reflection on working with a homeowner seeking to honor the heart and spirit of her home as they embarked together to remake it.*

## Remaking with honor

STEVE RUNDQUIST

I've been timber framing since 1980, and this is probably the most satisfying project I've ever done. The story, like the project, is complex: it's about my relationship with the craft as well as the homeowner.

I read somewhere that the best way to honor a tree is to make something with it more miraculous than the tree itself. I respect the source of my craft by doing what I can to honor the trees through thoughtful and expressive use of the timbers I select. So when I talked with the homeowner, I really heard what she was saying about honoring this home—respecting its soul and the memories and love it held—while remaking it. Early on, it became clear that what we had to build was a home that retained its original character and spirit while drawing in the landscape around it.

The whole house is surrounded by a variety of trees, and they played a role throughout the project. These trees—spruce, aspen, crab apple, ash, elderberry—influenced our build even more than I could have imagined. The spruce softened the corners of the house, helping it fit more comfortably into its space. The elderberry gave the homeowner a sense of connection with her history and hometown back in Ohio, and the aspens connected her deeply to her present and future in Colorado. Even the crab apples helped, offering beautiful spring color and framing the southerly view.

On this project, we had the opportunity to showcase the richness and variety of the wood we use, each with its own traits, feel, and beauty, and we took full advantage.



Occasionally, we find a project that requires us to put our heart into it in a different way, and this was one of those projects for me. We choose to be timber framers because no two builds are the same, no two timbers are the same, and no two clients are the same. On this project, I was reminded of the moments many of us have in this craft: setting the wetting bush, stepping back at the end of a long day to consider your work, when your client stands inside the frame and looks up at the timber work.

We don't often have the time to slow down and reflect, but I'm grateful for this project: it gave me the opportunity to think about my craft, the trees we use, and the people we work with to bring everything together in a finished timber frame.

*Read Steve's full article, "Reflections on craft and building connections" in Scantlings 226 (April/May 2020).*

## Jim's barn: A Deaf timber frame raising

STEVE AMSTUTZ

Every timber frame has a story. Every building has a history. Thirty years of crafting timber frames has given me—a fellow who has a penchant for history—a wealth of good stories. But this unique story about one special timber frame stands out....In 1989, my wife Nan and I cut our first timber frame for our home in the Adirondacks. Our daughter grew up here, and we still live in this house that we built with our young bodies and idealistic minds.

Back when we were planning this house, Nan's brother, Jim Boardman, expressed interest in helping us. In those days, Jim worked for IBM in robotics, so he had an analytically- and scientifically-inclined mind, and he loved working with his hands. We were tickled by his offer, but we were concerned about his safety, especially up in the air, and how he could make a meaningful contribution. Jim has a rare condition called Usher's Syndrome; he was born Deaf, and he sadly also has a genetically linked, degenerative eye disease named retinitis pigmentosa. Even then, though he had 20–20 eyesight, his peripheral vision was so reduced that it was like seeing the world through a paper towel tube.



Jim decided that to wire the house would be his optimal contribution. He did his research, got up to speed on the electrical code, and performed an ace job. But it wasn't woodworking or timber framing.

It is not surprising that Jim became very enamored with timber framing, as it fit his sensibility—he was good with his



hands, skilled, methodical, and patient. Plus he liked wood better than Romex. While wiring our house, Jim expressed interest in building a small timber frame barn on his property in the Hudson Valley. He asked if I would help him. Thus was born a wonderful and unique collaboration. I helped him design a 3-bent, 12' x 24' frame, modeled after Jack Sobon's iconic "Garden Tool Shed."

So, in the spring of 1990, I sourced timbers for Jim, lent him my sparse collection of timber framing tools, and traveled down to the Hudson Valley a couple of times and laid out one of each joint. I had only our modest house frame under my belt. The biggest saw we had was an 8¼" worm drive, and our mortising technology involved a D-handle drill and a bunch of Forstner bits, which required cleaning up joints with abundant chisel time. Jim was an eager, willing, and highly skilled student. One cutting demonstration per joint was sufficient. Over the summer and into the fall, Jim labored away in his garage and produced a well-crafted and well-organized pile of timbers.

Two factors played into my anxiety about raising this frame. First, Jim wanted his Deaf friends to be the bulk of the hand raising crew. The profoundly Deaf like Jim rely on their hands to communicate in their native language—the beautiful and artistically visual American Sign Language. My sign language was very limited, so we had to rely on Nan, who is bilingual, to be the interpreter for the raising. But still, that would have its challenges. For example, who should the raising crew be watching? Me or Nan? If hands were occupied with heavy timbers, how could workers use them to communicate? I was very concerned about the safety of all involved. Ultimately I recruited the help of a friend who is a fine carpenter and my father, figuring I could at least shout to two of my crew during an exciting moment.

The second factor was that Nan was pregnant with our daughter, and though little Annika's due date was October 10—the height of beautiful fall weather in the Hudson Valley—babies seldom follow schedules. (Twelve days late, Annika was welcomed into the world by a very worn out Momma and a bleary-eyed Papa, after a rather protracted birth.) Jim was patient, but the weather clock was ticking. So, ten days after the birth, we drove south and got started.

Bent assembly went well, and on the fine morning of November 3, we greeted the crew of about ten folks. As it turned out, the day went off without a hitch, all joinery fitting well. The crew members were fast learners, as well as devoted and attentive. Clearly the hardest and most demanding job was Nan's, being on her feet much of the day so soon after the birth. She beautifully bridged communication between Deaf and hearing folks and facilitated a very successful and meaningful raising day for all. Plus a superb lunch was served in traditional raising style.



I'd like to say that I gave a meaningful speech about this being the first Deaf timber frame raising in North American history. (Surely it must have been!) Or that I pontificated about the shared cross-cultural camaraderie we had just experienced. Or even that I eloquently praised Jim's phenomenal accomplishment. But I am sorry to say that I was simply too tired. Regardless, Jim wore a big Cheshire cat smile and his pride on his chest like a medal, as he scrutinized the beautiful frame he had crafted with his own hands and had erected with his friends. It was a day to remember! And a unique example of community spirit at a timber frame raising.

But this story has a recent and very sad twist. In late April of 2020, Jim was diagnosed with ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease, a degenerative disease in which nerve cells break down and reduce muscle function. It is an ugly disease, and it robs its victims brutally. His skilled hands—the tools of his ability to communicate, so essential to his many projects—have already become sluggish. He can no longer button buttons. And because of the progressing Retinitis Pigmentosa, Jim has a substantially smaller field of vision than he did thirty years ago. Life just isn't fair in dealing out its hardships. Jim is a proud man, who has been adapting to handicaps his whole life, yet now his world is closing in fast. The pragmatic response has been for Jim and his wife Cathy to pull up roots, sell their Hudson Valley home, and migrate to an assisted living facility close to their daughter in Michigan.

Today the barn stands strong and true in Jim's back yard. But Jim will never walk into it again, or pull out a piece of equipment that is stored there, or engage in a project inside its walls. Nor will he ever return to that property to see his barn again. Jim has lived thirty years with that barn, and it is part of who he is. He loves that barn. The new owners may never know the story of the barn, yet the barn's story remains and is true. I do know that Jim has his barn's history deeply embedded in his memory—we reminisced gleefully about it in mid-May. And I hope that his pride in his beautiful barn gives him some solace in the coming difficult times.

*This story originally appeared in Scantlings 227 (August 2020).*



# Remote renovation in Yuquot

STEVE LAWRENCE

In mid-October 2020, I took a two-week trip to Yuquot (also known as Friendly Cove) on the remote west coast of Vancouver Island to work on conserving a heritage church. We had no phone or internet and communication with the world was only an option in an emergency. The peace and quiet was incredibly special in these super connected, always-on times.

Yuquot is an ancient village site of the Mowachaht / Muchalaht First Nation. Archeology has shown habitation there for at least 5,000 years. In 1774, it was the place that the Spanish first came into contact with the indigenous peoples. Captain Cook of the English Navy followed in 1778 and a brisk fur trade began the long sad exploitation of this bountiful land and its people by Europeans. They built a church (of course) and several more after the others burned. On their way home, Cook and his crew made a small fortune in China selling the sea otter pelts, traded with locals for metal objects and such. News of this new source of wealth spread on their return and, well, the rest is history.

The large village site was used seasonally in the spring and summer months to gather and harvest the abundant food sources. The annual rhythm of the people's lives was driven by the sources of food and the environment. These people would harpoon grey and humpback whales from their great wooden canoes and whale hunting was a major cultural practice with much ritual and spiritual significance associated with it. In the winter months they would stay at Tahsis at the head of a nearby inlet, which was protected from the harsh winter storms. Each time they moved they would take the massive split cedar planks that formed the roof and siding. These were laid over and lashed to simple log structures that remained in place year-round.

Yuquot was a busy place for a long time. Images from the 1920s illustrate this quite well. Today the village is gone. One family has stayed on after most moved away in the 60s, but the rest of the community now lives in Gold River. One house, the 1950s church, and a lighthouse are the only remaining structures. The Nation has built six small wood cabins for



tourism at the far end of the beach, and this is where we stayed during our work there.

We traveled to the site by the *MV Uchuck III*, carrying all our gear out of Gold River. A coastal freighter built in 1941 in Vancouver, it is the oldest wood hull freighter still operating on the coast. She runs supplies to logging camps and fish farms, remote communities on the coast, and does a healthy tourist trade in the summer months.

The work was fairly straightforward and part of a multi-phase restoration of the church building. Framed in 1956, it is now managed in partnership between Parks Canada and the Nation on whose territory it sits. We had a list of work to be

done, such as fixing leaky roofs and flashings, replacing doors and windows, and repairing water damage to the structure. Water ingress has been the main issue, and neglect over the years has not helped any. One 10' section of wall around a window was completely black when we removed the interior paneling, which seemed to be the only thing holding it together.

Such tasks would not normally require much planning, but the remote location and total lack of







possible backup supplies gave it an interesting twist. Adding in the limited schedule of the Uchuck III and the possibility of bad weather scuppering our journey put extra stress on the project management. We did get delayed on departure for four days, but it became a happy accident. You must roll with the weather around here.

There were various historic gems waiting to be found, like the signature of the Rev. G. Miller scrawled in soft penciled flowery script on the back of some trim. In the roof space we found the following written in large hand a 2x6 rafter.

*"Tim Shore rode this rafter when roof collapsed Friday August 13th 1956. Suffered a broken head, back to work September 13th."*

We were the best of company and had the best of times. We were well provisioned with food, much from the natural bounty that this wonderful land provides. It was fall and mushroom season, and chanterelles, boletus, lobster, and others were in every meal it seemed. The Williams family provided us with fresh fish, and we harvested mussels from the rocks. We each had a cabin to ourselves and shared a communal cabin for cooking and socializing. Cook's duties were shared by rota and thankfully everyone could cook! We feasted every day. We were smart enough to bring 4 small kegs in 3 flavours. Laughs and conversation flowed with the beer but there were no hangovers on this crew.

We took a few days off and explored the area, finding the remains of a totem pole from the old village site was super cool and I have since found historic images of it standing. I believe it was made in the early 20s and fell over perhaps 25 years ago. Parts of this 100-year-old pole are still well preserved. This is the land of red cedar, and battered logs litter the beaches above the high tide mark, tossed there by winter storms. I spied a few particularly tidy ones and hauled a piece back to camp for some cleaving fun. I had a few axes with me and we hand split a few nice boards each for souvenirs.

Work went well and we completed our tasks just in time for our departure date when the Uchuck III came to collect us. Two of us began loading the vessel with her crew while the rest broke down scaffolds and packed tools. Departure day was wet and by the time we were loaded and sailing back to Gold River we were all pretty soaked but elated at the experience. We had hot showers and clean beds waiting for us that night and we dined in style at a very nice bistro in Gold River before falling happy and exhausted into our beds.

Looking back, it seems almost dreamlike, but a dream I'll never forget.

Learn more about Yuquot, National Historic Site of Canada here: [bit.ly/yuquot-national-historic-site](https://bit.ly/yuquot-national-historic-site)

Learn more about Yuquot and the Mowachaht/Muchalaht First Nation here: [bit.ly/yuquot-first-nation](https://bit.ly/yuquot-first-nation)



**TFGLive! has been a way** to stay connected for the past few years now, for those times in between conferences and builds. However, with the advent of Covid-19, which grabbed international headlines and directly impacted our working and personal lives, TFGLive! became a mainstay for Guild members. In 2020, the Guild covered topics ranging from pandemic protocols to shop tours to conversations about Guild affairs, including the apprenticeship training program and an excellent Guild board candidate “meet and greet.”

TFGLive! turned out to be one of those silver-lining discoveries: we found that we can indeed stay connected, perhaps even better than before, with the addition of online forums and educational events. TFGLive! prompted creative thinking about talking and working with our members more, and led us to hold a completely virtual Craft of Business Summit in spring 2021.

## TALKIN' SHOP

### Talkin' Shop with Garland Mill Timberframes



Garland Mill

We had a great turnout for Talkin' Shop with Dana Southworth of [Garland Mill Timberframes](#). It was an informative, fun, and relaxed virtual tour of one of the few remaining commercial water-powered sawmills in North America.

As reported in *Timber Framing* No. 119 (March 2016), Garland Mill has been in continuous

operation since 1856, largely unchanged since the Garlands swapped out the original reciprocating saw for a circular saw early in the mill's existence.

Dana shared videos his sons produced, showing everything from the source of the water for the mill right through to the

disposition of the timbers and waste at the other end of the mill. Along the way, Dana shared the history, achievements, capabilities, and limitations of the mill. We all learned a few tricks of his trade that allow him and his cousin Ben to operate the mill to supply the specialty timber needs of their business, which is mainly timber framing. The mill can cut 20" thick by 30' long timbers, and this capability allows them to cut continuous rafter plates and ridges for their structures.

*This article first appeared in a summer 2020 Guild Notes. Watch the session [here](https://bit.ly/talkin-shop-garland-mill), [bit.ly/talkin-shop-garland-mill](https://bit.ly/talkin-shop-garland-mill).*







## Talkin' Shop with FraserWood Industries



FraserWood

Keith Murray of [FraserWood Industries](#) joined us live from the company's facility in Squamish, British Columbia, and began his session where most FraserWood projects begin: at the Radio Frequency Vacuum (RFV) kilns. From there, Keith took us into the "dry tent" where all dry orders are sorted and staged for production.

He noted that all timber is brought in oversized so that it can be resawn straight and square after drying. Below, right, is a resaw sitting on the 80 ft. bed. The bed also has a 32 in. single head planer for planing large timbers, as well as a circular saw used for creating a circular sawn texture or kerfing (providing a relief cut for) large boxed heart timbers.



The building is also home to FraserWood's glulam press, which was designed and built in-house. The company is certified by APA to laminate glulam beams to ANSI standards. Keith showed a sample of a curved GrainMatched glulam (GMGL), which is made by slicing oversized boxed heart timber, drying the slices, and then gluing them back together in the original order. The result is glulam strength with the appearance of a natural timber.

After examining an interesting current project that uses laminated product to deal with the challenge of wrapping structural steel with thin boards, Keith took us into the main fabrication shop. It is a full and busy shop, complete with a 5-axis CNC machine, a Hundegger planer, overhead cranes, a large sander that can sand 48" wide material, a handwork area, and a sanding and texturing area.

Keith also unveiled FraserWood's new staining building, where more and more projects end up for their final preparation, from staining to test fitting and assembling of trusses. Keith noted that finishing has become a much larger part of the company's fabrication work, and took us to a project that required 7 coats of finish—one tint, three coats of epoxy, and three coats of polyurethane.

We then headed back to the main shop for a Q&A session with Keith, who answered questions about shipping back and forth across the US/Canada border, the types of wood with which the company works, and, of course, the varied outdoor amenities offered in the Squamish area.

Watch the session here, [bit.ly/talkin-shop-fraserwood](https://bit.ly/talkin-shop-fraserwood).

*This article first appeared in a fall 2020 edition of Guild Notes. Scan QR codes or follow the links on the next page to follow links to other TFGLive! sessions.*



## More Talkin' Shop

Carolina Timberworks & Mesic Vale ([bit.ly/talkin-shop-carolina-mesic](https://bit.ly/talkin-shop-carolina-mesic))

Cascade Joinery & MoreSun Timber Frames ([bit.ly/talkin-shop-cascade-moresun](https://bit.ly/talkin-shop-cascade-moresun))

Hardwick Post & Beam  
([bit.ly/talkin-shop-hardwick](https://bit.ly/talkin-shop-hardwick))



## OTHER TFG LIVE! SESSIONS

### Stereotomy with Patrick Moore

Guild members gathered to watch, listen, and ask questions of Patrick Moore of The Professional School of Practical Stereotomy.

With a clear drafting square, a clear ruler, and a nice fat Sharpie as his only tools, Patrick drew elevation and plan views while explaining stereotomy. As he worked, he guided us through an understanding of the differences between these plan views and how they can be captured effectively on a two-dimensional surface. He then employed a compass to develop the net view, which he cut out and folded along the hip lines, finally putting the complete model together with a small piece of tape. Patrick demonstrated the accuracy of his method by overlaying the 3D model on the plan view, showing the final, perfect alignment.

Patrick returned two weeks later to present a session on proper drafting techniques, rafter and hip elevations, the “end view” procedure for backing angles, the “straying” procedure of a hip or valley, and the notion of the footprint and footprint plane.

Using a pencil, a right triangle, a straight edge, and a story pole, Patrick led his audience through the process of laying out the hip at the intersection of any two flat roof planes that intersect at



Stereotomy 1  
[bit.ly/stereotomy-part-1](https://bit.ly/stereotomy-part-1)



Stereotomy 2  
[bit.ly/stereotomy-part-2](https://bit.ly/stereotomy-part-2)

less than 180° when measured from inside the structure.

With only the pitches of the two roof planes, Patrick demonstrated how to lay out the hip, obtaining its length as well as the angles for the plumb and level cuts for the hip. From there, he defined the backing angles on the hip (the beveled surfaces that define hip peak) and demonstrated how to find them for any hip—regular or irregular (unequal pitches).

Patrick completed the session by using stereotomy to find the location of the peak on the top of the hip. The simplicity of the approach and tools, the speed of the layout process, and the accuracy inherent in the method was truly impressive. The fact that this can be done to a high level of accuracy almost anywhere in the world without a calculator, computer, or special tools makes it a method well-suited to all situations and cultures. And, it makes the work fun.

### Jack Sobon reflects on the craft of timber framing



Jack Sobon  
[bit.ly/reflections-jack-sobon](https://bit.ly/reflections-jack-sobon)

Architect and craftsman Jack Sobon reflects on the history of this enduring craft, the beauty and proportion of pre-industrial craftsmanship, the appeal of vernacular architecture, and the relevance of timber framing for us today and into the future.

Order Jack Sobon's latest book, *Hand Hewn: The Traditions, Tools, and Enduring Beauty of Timber Framing* at [tfguild.org](https://tfguild.org).



Photos by Daniel Girard



# TIMBER FRAME ENGINEERING COUNCIL

**The Timber Frame Engineering Council (TFEC)** works to advance the art and science of timber framing by undertaking systematic research, the writing and discussion of findings, and the codification of timber frame joinery and structural practices. To that end, the TFEC conducts symposia specifically on subjects related to engineering, where members can discuss, at length, issues and techniques.

The diverse educational offerings by TFEC support not only continued learning and teaching opportunities for engineers, but also provide timber framers and others in our community the chance to strengthen their understanding of the structures and the materials they use.



Photos by Matthew Meyer

## TFEC Symposium: Diverse offering inspires new member

NORMAN F. PERKINS, P.E.

In August 2019, I traveled to southern New Hampshire as a newbie to the Timber Framers Guild world not sure what to expect. My goal was to learn what the TFEC was about, make connections with interesting people, and determine if there are mutually beneficial collaborative opportunities for the Guild and my firm.

I learned about the Guild and its members by attending the technical presentations, the TFEC members meeting, and the TFEC social and slideshow. The technical portion of the day started with Joe Miller discussing the unique use of traditional joinery in unconventional timber framing. Dick Schmidt presented a thorough discussion of ASTM D245 and the development of a computational tool that contains enhancements beyond D245 to expand its utility. Tom Nehil then educated the group on the adaptive reuse and in situ grading using TFEC 3, further enhancing the lesson with a case study. A tutorial on the proper preparation and performance of site inspections with the Gedney House example was presented by Helen Watts.

Following an excellent lunch eaten outside on a beautiful day, Jim DeStefano shared his insights on integrating cross laminated timber (CLT) into timber structures. Emil Cashin, Florian Back, and Jeff Hershberger held an open forum to discuss structural analysis software. My takeaway from the software discussion

was that the best tool is the one with which you are familiar, can afford, and/or that gets the job done without unnecessary features. Tom Moore presented an introduction to the SIP Design Guide, outlining the guide and discussing its intended audience. The technical session wrapped up with a presentation discussing fire and timber, AWC TR-10, by Chris Carbone.

The TFEC members meeting was an informative affair, and a summary of current research being carried out was also provided, along with a publications report. I was impressed that the group makes research a priority, which was proven by the directing of significant funds to this endeavor.

I left the symposium inspired by the passion displayed by Guild members and impressed with the diversity of the membership. The Timber Framers Guild is the only group I've experienced that includes engineers, architects, craftsman (traditional and non-traditional), manufacturers, entertainers, authors, and software developers. Not only are all welcome, but all have equal voices. I look forward to my next Guild event, and collaborations with new friends and colleagues.

*This article first appeared in Scantlings 223 (September 2019) as part of coverage of the 2019 national conference held at Southern New Hampshire University.*



# Expanding Horizons at the Timber Grading Course

MIKE WESTGARD

When the class started bright and early, you could immediately tell that the seating was designed by engineers. You know it's snug when the engineers start the class by saying, "I know it feels a bit cramped, but you'll feel more comfortable after you are seated for a while." Well, the engineers were right, it went from feeling tight to cozy within the hour.

We started with an exercise led by Ron Anthony to introduce ourselves to our neighbors, and after a few minutes, began our session with a confession to Dick Schmidt that nobody read the entire folder of course materials.

Ron taught us the characteristics of wood all the way down to the cellular level, but in a way that made it possible to understand, even if you didn't show up to class with a PhD. To learn exactly how wood reacts to stresses like load, moisture, and mechanics of failure is truly a game changer in how I perceive the structure that protects me. I think I assumed I knew what the wood was doing. After this training I am so much more aware of how the wood behaves and reacts, how to read the characteristics of a timber, and will not default to calling characteristics defects.

Rick Hicks, from the Western Wood Products Association, went into the rules of grading and related theory. It is easy to get confused, but the grading rules made it clear with numerous supporting documents and supplements outlining exclusions and interpretations.

As day two began, we all had some level of understanding, but were also confused for one reason or another. This is the where the learning process begins: if you're not struggling, you're not learning.

We began working our way through visual grading, the first assessment in grading timber. With visual characteristics like split or slope of grain you can downgrade a timber, which changes the tolerances of other features. Seeing a split or ring shake or rot can send you on quickly to the next piece until you learn more and find out that most characteristics in a timber



are expected and what might look like a defect is actually a characteristic of the timber and any given characteristic has a measurable tolerance to determine grade.

This is important because you can assess in real time if a timber has changed since its green grading and no longer makes the grade needed for the design values assigned. The ability to observe and measure timber grade is also vital when you need to replace a timber: instead of having to purchase a new timber, increasing cost and resulting in time delays, you can review your own inventory and utilize a piece that would otherwise be downgraded.

In short, you have a superpower now: you can make grade adjustments based on the rules and measurables. Cutting off a split that caused downgrade, measuring the characteristics, finding the hidden value will make your project stay on timeline and budget. Something as simple as identifying the exact species can give you the ability to increase allowable design limits because the grading rules are based on groupings of similar trees.

We continued learning the mechanics of wood by diving into the in-situ grading training. The grading of timber in a building is much more difficult for a variety of reasons, including mechanical systems blocking access, painted timbers hiding visual defects, and the fact that you typically cannot see all six sides of the timber. Ron taught us some basic processes to avoid spending time doing tedious calculations as well as some commonsense assessment tactics. For example, when assessing failure in a building one should look at what is working and then look at the failure—there simply could be one low grade stick, which would not be an indicator of the whole structure.

We then went through the WWPAs little brown book of grading rules again, just to be sure we were completely confused before we went out and started practicing on actual timbers with our own books in hand. With a head full of information, we broke up into groups and started using the rules, exceptions, and observable mechanics to make assessments.

Rick, Ron, and Dick moved from group to group to work with us. I found this part of the teaching the most inspiring: they worked and struggled with us rather than just giving us the answers, they joined the confusion almost as if they were learning too. They were good teachers and let us work out our problems, only giving input when we were completely stuck. Together we began to share with our colleagues the parts we understood and listened intently to those who understood what we did not. We even shared some laughs.



Photos by Mike Westgard



With some new hands-on skills and some experience using the rule books and technical bulletins we ended the second day, many of us feeling that the lightbulb was there, but maybe only running on 3 watts.

The final day arrived: testing. We took our written test and reviewed and discussed the results before moving on to the live test, where we went through four testing stations. While there was much discussion, again, we were now all reaching the same conclusions. Our instructors didn't make it easy on us: most of the pieces had some objectionable elements so we were suspicious of the samples that were simple to grade. This part of the testing was invaluable; our conclusions were strictly our own and we gained confidence from identifying and proving grade along with limiting factors.

Coming in, I only had intuition from my experience in the industry; as a result of this course I now have a process for coming to conclusion as well as the ability to identify resources prove my conclusion.

Every time I attend a Guild workshop, I come away with a clearer picture of the building processes, the building sciences, and the confidence to communicate about our industry with the hopes of influencing others in best practices. Above all else I take away a rejuvenation of spirit and deeper love of the wood with which we work. With new knowledge, new friendships, and new tools, I've gone back to the day-to-day refreshed from timber friend therapy.

*This article first appeared in Scantlings 224 (November 2019).*

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## TFEC presents “Fighting the Fake Limits on Timber Strength”

Following upon the success of Dick Schmidt's July 2020 TFGLive! presentation, “Knots—They Are Not as Big as You Think,” Dick returned with Tom Nehil in December to present “Fighting the Fake Limits on Timber Strength: Two Case Studies Using D245 and TFEC 3.”

[bit.ly/tfglive-knots-schmidt](https://bit.ly/tfglive-knots-schmidt)  
[bit.ly/fighting-the-limits-nehil-schmidt](https://bit.ly/fighting-the-limits-nehil-schmidt)

Dick and Tom led the audience through the process of determining the design stress values of timber species and their grades using two ASTM standards: D2555, “Standard Practice for Establishing Clear Wood Strength Values,” and D245, “Standard Practice for Establish-



Knots



Fighting the limits

ing Structural Grades and Related Allowable Properties for Visually Graded Lumber.”

Both presentations serve timber frame engineers and timber framers in three valuable ways:

For timber framers working with species that are not generally commercially available, the processes described in the presentation provide guidance on the accurate development of appropriate grade and stress value.

In restoration or rehabilitation work, when there is a question about the suitability of the existing timber to support the loads required by modern standards, the timber framer and their engineer can evaluate timber in situ.

In situations where standard commercial stress values define timber at a certain size as inadequate in strength, timbers in high-stress locations can be individually evaluated to determine if the selected timber does in fact meet the requirements.

This presentation, together with Dick's earlier presentation on knot sizing, is an excellent step forward in our understanding of our materials and timber frames.



Photos by Daniel Girard



# TFEC library and publications

## About the TFEC Library and Publications Committee

The TFEC Publications Committee produces standards, technical bulletins, and other resources related to a broad range of timber frame engineering issues. TFEC publications can be found on the TFEC web page ([bit.ly/timber-frame-engineering](http://bit.ly/timber-frame-engineering)).

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*The 2019 version of TFEC 1 advances our ability to effectively design timber frames with a wider variety of materials.*

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## Update to TFEC 1

DICK SCHMIDT

In 2019, the Timber Frame Engineering Council issued an updated version of *TFEC 1—Standard for Design of Timber Frame Structures and Commentary*.

The first version of the standard was delivered to the timber frame community in 2007, and subsequently updated in 2010. Many have found the standard to be an important part of their engineering toolkit. One significant aspect of the standard is its very existence: while not recognized by a national or international standards organization, it sets guidelines based on sound engineering principles and research. The standard is referenced in contract documents, project specifications, and drawing notes, indicating to building officials and our clients that our work is guided by proven principles and methods. Some highlights of the 2019 updates to the standard include:

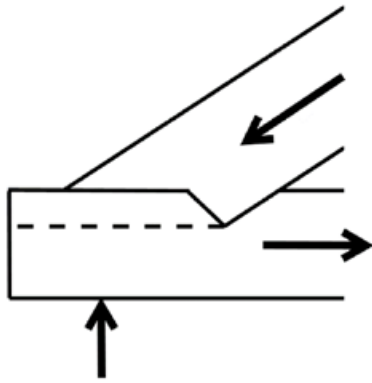
- A greater understanding of the available methods for determining design values for structural timber. The design values in the *National Design Specification for Wood Construction (NDS) Supplement* stand as the primary means for daily use. However, when a species isn't listed in the NDS tables or we have timbers all cut from white fir, we can now turn to the appropriate source documents with guidance from a new provision in TFEC 1, and also to TFEC Technical Bulletin 11 for the procedures to develop design values.
- Would you imagine that we actually need an ASTM standard to define features of a peg? Well, yes, we do. And until recently we had no standard for pegs. ASTM D8023 is the "Standard Specifications for Round Wood Dowels (Pegs) for Use in Wood Construction" and is referenced by TFEC 1, which also permits other cross section shapes that would otherwise conform to the ASTM standard.



Daniel Girard

- Design values in the NDS Supplement are based on timbers in the green condition. A study by Ron Anthony and Jim DeStefano proposes adjustment factors for timber used in dry service (TFEC Technical Bulletin 9), and this recommendation appears as a new provision in TFEC 1, which will be particularly useful to those who do condition assessment of existing buildings, where timbers will have reached equilibrium moisture content and their dimensions have stabilized.
- Design of mortise and tenon connections loaded in tension depends on the bending strength of the wood peg. Recent research by Dan Hindman at Virginia Tech has given us a simple equation to determine bending strength as a function of specific gravity of the peg material. Direct numerical values for the most common peg species are also listed. Note that explicit design of mortise and tenon connections is necessary only when those connections are required to resist tension (tenon withdrawal) loads under raising or in service.
- New end distance, edge distance, and spacing requirements for pegs have also been developed. A new table of values is modeled on similar values in the NDS for steel, dowel-type fasteners and will be easier to interpret and apply than the previous equivalent bolt approach. The new table values are based on a numerical study using the equivalent bolt approach and provide essentially the same outcomes with less design effort.
- Design of wood-on-wood bearing connections, such as a rafter notched into a tie of a truss, often induce a stress state regarded as block shear (different from shear in a bending member). Block shear, as the name suggests, has the potential to shear off a block of wood along a plane parallel to the grain of the timber (the dashed line in the figure). The shear stress distribution along the failure plane is not uniform. Instead, the stress has a peak value at the notch and is zero at the free end of the tie. We assume a triangular stress distribution to determine the shear capacity of the connection, or to determine the connection proportions for a given load. The approach is similar to that used for row tear-out in Section E.3 of the NDS.





- Finally, TFEC 1 now has provisions for design of stand-alone frames that rely on knee braces for lateral stability. Porte cochères, open pavilions, and similar structures are the targets for these provisions. Research conducted by Fernando Fonseca at Brigham Young University and John Judd at the University of Wyoming gives us the design coefficients we need for design of these structures subjected to seismic loading. Extrapolation of system behavior to frames with long braces (more than 2/3 the story height in length) is left to the judgement of the designer, but the seismic design coefficients are expected to be in the same range as those for knee-braced frames.

The process to develop the 2019 version of TFEC 1 was led by a committee that included Jim DeStefano, Tanya Luthi, Tom Nehil, and Dick Schmidt. However, to be as inclusive as possible, the committee solicited input from the TFEC membership at large (special thanks to Helen Watts and Paul Laudenschlager for their contributions), and the TFEC-TAC reviewed and approved the final document.

Membership in the TFEC is open to any guild member with an interest in wood engineering. For more information contact Helen Watts, Membership Chair (hewatts@gwi.net).

*Dick Schmidt is Technical Advisory Committee Chair for TFEC. Elements of this article first appeared in Scantlings 219 (February 2019) and 220 (April 2019).*

## The Guide to Structural Evaluation of Existing Timber Structures (TFEC 3-2019)

**BRIAN MALONE**

Whether a structure is being restored in its existing state, changing use, or undergoing a full renovation, it is the engineer's responsibility to understand what exists, and provide a safe yet economical and (hopefully) historically sensitive design. With existing wood structures—which burn, decay, shrink, swell, creep, and sometimes lean—this involves a specialized skill set that the TFEC works to develop in our Guild members. The TFEC Publications Committee is therefore proud to share *TFEC 3-2019—Guide to Structural Evaluation of Existing Timber Structures* (Jim DeStefano, P.E., Ron Anthony, Tom Nehil, P.E., and Jaret Lynch, P.E.)

*It is the engineer's responsibility to understand what exists, and provide a safe yet economical and historically sensitive design.*

Initial evaluation of an existing building involves a qualitative structural evaluation and a condition assessment, which can be performed simultaneously. The structural evaluation identifies the structural system, verifies a continuous load path of recently connected and reasonably sized members, and takes note of its performance thus far. The condition assessment takes a closer look at the state of individual components of the structure and identifies damage that will render certain members unsuitable or in need of repair. This publication provides direction on how and where to identify damage from deterioration, infestation, fire, and mechanical damage. It also gives a brief overview of the tools used to gather this information.



Photos by Daniel Girard



## TFG COMPANIES

**The mission of TFG Companies** is to expand opportunities for the timber frame industry, its businesses, and its craftsmen, and to provide education, resources, and networking for our members.

Craft, and the craft of business, are deeply intertwined. Our goal is to build a vital timber frame community with a strong market where all can thrive.

In the last two years, our Company members have embraced the opportunity to connect virtually, resulting in the new Peer-to-Peer Program and a 2021 Craft of Business Summit held entirely on video conference.

## Peer-to-Peer: Building networks, building community

The TFG Companies Committee tested the peer-to-peer networking group concept with a group of eight Guild members from companies large and small, suppliers and timber framers. The intention of the peer-to-peer network is to create spaces where companies in the timber framing industry can learn from and support one another to build thriving businesses.

The first peer-to-peer networking session took place in late March 2019. By midsummer, the number of groups had grown to three, with a couple dozen participants from across the industry. Christian Gudmand of Hardwick Post & Beam led the way with the Peer-to-Peer Program, and wrote in a summer issue of the Craft of Business newsletter “the peer-to-peer groups provide participants with a means of using their discussions of diverse experiences to both teach and learn together.”

This was echoed by Steve Gorby (Logs to Heirlooms), a member of the very first peer-to-peer group: “I’ve been a member of the Guild since 2012. I joined at Will Beemer’s recommendation after I attended Heartwood School. Each time I’ve interacted with the Guild I’ve gained something personally and professionally. But I’ve been slow to develop any meaningful relationships within the Guild.

“So, this opportunity to have direct interaction with others in this business is welcomed. Meeting and talking candidly with others who have been there and/or share similar concerns has been so valuable that I look forward to our next conference call with excitement. I know I’m going to gain knowledge and further develop relationships.”

Throughout 2020, the peer-to-peer groups continued to blossom as they explored topics both tough and mundane. The pandemic loomed large in early spring of 2020 as a topic of conversation, and the peer-to-peer groups brought this subject to the Guild at large for two special TFGLive! sessions on safety protocols, federal support opportunities to weather the economic challenges presented by the nationwide shutdown, and more.

The relationships that have come out of these groups, and the connections made, have strengthened all participants as they have learned and grown together.



Daniel Girard

## SepTimber 2020

In 2020, the Guild launched “SepTimber” in partnership with *Log & Timber Home Living* magazine.

Throughout the month, TFG Company members celebrated craft, community, and companies by telling the stories of timber framing through the eyes of the people who live it every day. They shared special projects that have stuck with them long after the tools were packed away as well as tales of special people they’ve met and interesting places they’ve worked.

To read the stories, visit <https://septimber.org>



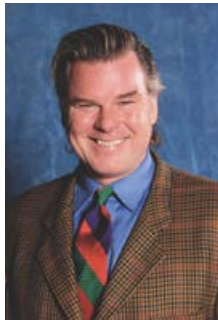


# Craft of Business 2021

In spring 2021, the TFG Companies Committee hosted a virtual Craft of Business Summit. With four speakers covering diverse topics on successive Tuesdays, the summit attracted Company members from across North America; the variety of topics lent itself to deeper discussion and engagement both during and after the event.

This was the first time the Craft of Business Summit has been held online, and Guild members were pleased to be able to attend sessions as part of their regular working week rather than having to take several days away from their businesses and families. Jonathan Orpin of New Energy Works hosted a virtual happy hour the evening before the first session and led a lively conversation.

The first session of the Craft of Business Summit, Day One, featured Peter Miller, President of the Home Group at Active Interest Media, which publishes *Log & Timber Home Living* and numerous other titles, including *Old House Journal*, *Traditional Building*, and *New Old House*. Drawing on more than 40 years of experience in building, remodeling, and architecture media, Peter Miller spoke on industry trends and discussed emerging opportunities. As the co-author of the biannual *Log and Timber Home Production Report*, which documents trends in the timber home industry and quantifies the number of log and timber frame houses sold and built each year, he offered unique insight into building trends specific to our sector of the industry.



In the second session, we were joined by Pete Dunnigan, Senior Project Manager at Foard Panel, who brought his deep knowledge of the construction industry with a talk focused on commercial contracts and project management. Pete has been with Foard Panel for more than a decade and is the lead project manager for both commercial and residential projects. Prior to joining Foard Panel, Peter Dunnigan was a project manager for a large general contractor and

handled a variety of commercial projects, including schools, healthcare facilities, industrial buildings, hotels, and apartment complexes throughout New England. For our Guild members who are taking on commercial projects, Pete's experience was of particular interest, but his advice applies anyone interested in good project management.

For Day Two, we turned our attention inward, to the people who make our business go: in short, our team. Construction business management specialist Melanie Hodgdon presented on the subject of "The Bookkeeper, the CPA, and the Numbers You Need." Through her company, Business Systems Management, she works with clients to identify financial and procedural



challenges and to generate realistic solutions that reflect the resources and style of their companies. She talked in-depth about the different roles of the bookkeeper and accountant and how to navigate the spaces between these two essential team members.

In our final session of the Craft of Business Summit, David Altman, Founder and Principal of private equity investment firm Gorge Holdings, examined how to assess and empower the human assets as catalysts to make a company more dynamic. David's philosophy is "it's about the people," and that was reflected strongly as he shared his experience as someone who invests in, assesses, and strengthens companies. His firm works with company employees to help guide and profitably grow the businesses in which it invests, and he brings his leadership development knowledge to every project. With a focus on the valuable people-power inherent to a skilled craft business like timber framing, David offered guidance to the audience and brought the conversation into focus around empowering and developing team members, a fitting conclusion to the 2021 Craft of Business Summit.



## QR codes for the summit sessions



Miller



Dunnigan



Hodgdon



Altman



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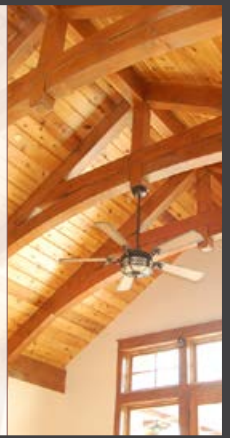


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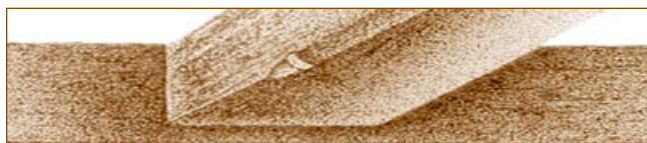
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