



SCANTLINGS

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COMMUNITY BUILDING PROJECT

At ClearWater Farm, new insights on raising day

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For almost two years, I've been waiting to participate in a TFG Community Building Project. The ClearWater Farm Community Building Project was everything I had hoped it would be, a meaningful experience for all of us: the community who supported the project, our Guild volunteers who raised this barn, our instructors who came to share their knowledge, and myself as I finally start to get this whole timber framing thing.

Over my two years at the Guild, I've come to know your deep passion for this craft. I know you spend your vacation days coming to conferences. I know you drive nine hours to go to a regional. I know you take two days out of the office to come to the Craft of Business summits. I know you buy things at the conference auction that you don't need, just to support the Guild. I know you have decades-long friendships with competitors and with folks you only see once or twice a year. I see, feel, and understand the Guild community, and your enthusiasm is contagious.

But the timber framing part? I've not gotten my hands dirty, held a mallet, or handled a chain mortiser, so the passion for the craft itself has never been clear. My week in Ontario changed all that. While I don't want to give up my job in the Guild office to join the Apprenticeship Training Program. However, I do love that frame in Georgina—enough that I have more pictures on my phone of that project than of my kids (almost).

The project had all the necessary ingredients for a fantastic Guild event. The location was amazing: we worked on a picturesque farm with more butterflies than I've ever seen in my life and a clean, clear lake just across the road. What better way to wrap up a day's work than



All photos by Timber Framers Guild

Above: The Community Building Project crew with their completed frame. Below: Etching the project name into the frame. Handbuilt Guild sawhorses, ready to go to work.

a swim in the lake before (and sometimes after) dinner? The community fed us so well and so often that it was hard to go back to regular life where we all have to cook and clean up for ourselves. We had meals delivered to the work site by volunteers and we had several dinners out in the community. We were hosted by friends of the farm, board members, a church, and even a curling club. Guild magic can be hard to articulate sometimes but it's easy to see. When a group of 50 passionate Guild volunteers and instructors get together to raise a beautiful structure, that's the magic. When phone numbers are exchanged, jobs offered, cars loaned, and tears shed at goodbye, you know something special has happened. I saw it and I know the community saw it too. And now, ClearWater Farm will use this barn to further its educational mission, just as the project itself furthered the Guild's mission. By this time next year, they expect to have a completed building to use as an educational space for children that will also house a kitchen to process the food produced at the farm.

Some of us came with little to no timber framing experience, some are professional timber framers who









want to learn from other professionals. And learn we did. I learned about the basics of layout, hand cutting, tool use, safety (so much about safety), teamwork, rigging, forklifts, manlifts, and so much more. Working with my hands, on a project, has shown me why this is all so special. To go from a yard full of huge timbers to a perfectly fitted frame was awe inspiring.

I found timber framing to be a full-body experience of hands-on and mental work, with the added element of trust in your compatriots as one group of volunteers cut a mortise on one side of the yard while another group cut a tenon on the other side. And the miracle on raising day: they fit together just right. I'm so grateful that I was able to attend this project as I now have new

insights to inform my work and deepen my connection to the Guild.

My contribution to the project was modest. I was the most novice volunteer on site, but I know which queen post is mine, where it is in the building and how beautiful it is. I like to think about it as mine, but really it was many months in the making and was the result of dozens of people's efforts. And just like my small contribution, that queen post would be worthless on its own—it takes every stick in that frame to make a solid building that will stand for generations to come and it took every volunteer, instructor, and community partner to make the ClearWater project a success.

