



2021 Candidates for the Timber Framers Guild Board of Directors

Candidate Statements

Rene Allen



I have been in construction for over two decades, working with my family business in Colorado and Oregon. I started out doing commercial stick framing and when the business transitioned to timber framing in 2001, I jumped at the chance to learn a new and fascinating craft. As a life-long artist and builder, this seemed like a perfect blend of skill, creativity, and timeless beauty.

I spent several years working in the shop at Swiftsure Timberworks, learning the craft and developing my skills, eventually becoming the Shop Manager and Installation Lead. In 2005, I was introduced to the Timber Framers Guild when I volunteered at the Salem Centennial Rotary Pavilion Community Building Project. Although I was only able to participate for a couple days, the experience had a lasting impact on my career as a timber framer. It was unlike anything I had been a part of. This event was a crash course in the safety and

best practices that has become a fundamental part of my approach to teaching, which has been a central focus in the years since. It was also an introduction to this vibrant and welcoming community of people that I am honored to be part of.

Since then, I have been an active member and tried to attend as many Guild events as possible. I got my first chance to teach timber framing in 2007 at the Guild Conference in Asilomar, where I stumbled upon the Children's Discovery Workshop and helped out for a few days. This led to instructing at the next two kids' builds and then later at a Girls Build/TFG crossover event at Mt. Hood in 2018. Throughout the years, I have continued to teach and to prioritize a safe and welcoming learning environment that fosters education and community. If you have been to a Community Building Project in recent years you may have seen me carving away on a timber or giving safety talks. Perhaps we worked together or shared stories around a fire. I had the privilege to instruct at the Clearwater Barn in Ontario in 2018, and then in 2019 at the Lake Roesiger Project in Washington. That same year, I volunteered at Ekvn-Yefolecv and the Sunrise Mill. Last year I helped out with the Whitehorse Pavilion and the Oso Memorial Portals in Washington. Each of these experiences has deepened my commitment to the craft and to the people who make up the Timber Framers Guild.

I would bring to the Board my commitment to education and community, as well as prior experience working on a board of Directors. I currently serve on the board of the Jackson County Cultural Trust, an organization that disperses funds to non-profit arts programs. I also serve on my local planning commission. In this role, I work with six other commissioners to advise city staff on developments and planning decisions that affect the small town in which I live. I continue to work with and volunteer for Girls Build, a non-profit dedicated to teaching girls trade-related skills at a young age. If elected to the board of Directors, I would focus on Community Build Projects, developing comprehensive safety protocols that encapsulate and teach best practices in the industry. As someone who has benefited from the Guild's educational focus, I look forward to continuing that work for the next generation.

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Sandy Bennett



Once again it is my honor to run for the Guild board. For me, it is a meaningful way to give back a little for all the Guild has done for me and my family. I believe the Guild has clearly been the most formative organization that's influenced the track of my life and to have the opportunity to forward the Guild's mission is an opportunity to say thank you.

For well over 40 years the Guild has been a major part of what has made this such a rewarding life path for me. Some might say "Dude, you're wacky, the Guild's only been around for 36 years" and, while there may be a grain of

truth to the wacky part, I would argue the Guild values and spirit have been around far longer than its formalization in 1985. When we decided to try to bring timber framing to the Midwest in the form of Riverbend, about the only thing we knew was what we didn't know. But we did know there were people in the East who were working to resurrect this mostly dormant craft and after reaching out to folks like Stewart Elliott and the late great Ed Levin and many others, who were more than willing to take a phone call to guide and to help, we could feel the Guild spirit, to share and to teach. This led to meeting the wonderful folks at what was known as Benson Woodworking at the time, including Tedd and Christine and Chris Madigan and Dennis Marcom, both of whom I've spoken with in the last couple weeks, and who, along with Tom Page, were highly regarded by Mort Morden (different story). And there are so many more, all of whom have become life-time friends. And then that Brungraber guy just stopped by one day in 1980 and....No, the Guild has been around much longer than most think.

I could go on and on about the Guild and its influence on me and the world, which would include 4 trips to Russia in the early 90s, and of course the Guelph bridge, and Habitat houses, and....but that should all be done with a beverage of choice. It was the Guild which set the path for my family and I to move to Virginia now 27 years ago.

If re-elected my commitment is still the same: to have an opinion, a voice with which to share that opinion, and an open mind to consider the opinions of others to reach a consensus to do what's best for the Guild. And there's much to do. For instance, we have so much potential with Heartwood and other opportunities, how can anyone not be excited! I have enjoyed serving on the finance committee and governance committee, but one personal goal is to get more young blood involved with the committees, projects, conferences, etc., as a means of prepping folks to move to the board.

To borrow from Jack Sobon's presentation at SepTimberfest, when I came to that crotch in the road, I'm glad I choose the road paved with timber (maybe you had to be there). If there's anything you would like to know or discuss more in depth or something you would just like to chat about, please grab a beverage and call my cell.

Contact Sandy at (540) 357-1574.

Jim DeSantis



The Timber Framers Guild has been an essential part of my life since I joined in 1997. Since then I have counted on the Guild for inspiration, camaraderie, and education. I have volunteered and instructed on Guild projects, attended every Western conference and one Eastern since '97, and kept up on best practices through our excellent publications. As both an educational organization and trade organization, we are unique in the way we interact; the spirit of cooperation rather than competition defines us. In my experience, this is rare and speaks to the Guild's mission and the integrity of its members. I am honored to be considered for a seat on the board of such a fine group of humans. It's been said before and holds true, you are the best people I know.

I discovered timber framing at the local bookstore during my college years at University of Oregon and I wanted in. I got my first timber framing job in 1990. I worked on a few frames in the forests outside Eugene, Oregon, and was definitely

hooked. Unfortunately, the company didn't last and there were only a few other outfits on the west coast. I went back to working at my family's landscape company, estimating installation jobs, managing projects, and running the carpentry division, getting to build a few timber frames here and there. After a few years I realized my heart was with timber framing and it was time to get back to it.

I went to my first Guild conference in 1997 hoping to find meaningful work. I found a job that didn't require me to move across the country, but what I really found was my people. During my apprentice years working for Lon Tyler, I attended at least one project every year between the years 1998 and 2005. These projects proved invaluable to me in both their educational component and the connections made. I remember the COLTS workshop in Texas in 1999 like it was yesterday. The calm and thoughtful demeanor of John Miller and Curtis Milton leading a group of high school students raising their own workshop. Flinging melons into Lake Houston with a trebuchet. So many good memories.

I started Silver Creek Timberworks in 2006. I work as a designer, salesperson, shop manager, bookkeeper, joiner, and site manager. While I occasionally employ folks, I am mostly a one man show. This limits the size and number of projects I can take on, but has given me an understanding of all facets of contracting. This approach has allowed me to take on restoration projects, subcontracting for other timber framers, custom passion projects, as well as the bread and butter.

The prospect of being one of the guiding hands in the Guild is one I will not take lightly. The things I can bring to the board are a passion for the craft, a drive to increase the magic of community building projects, and an increase in membership and financial viability.

Thank you for your consideration, Jim DeSantis

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Jackson DuBois



I live in Central New York with my wife in a 200-year-old historic timber-framed home which we are currently restoring. We're out in the country with some hens and an old dog and we like it here. I build and design custom timber frames and work on old houses in the area. Additionally, I serve as both the zoning officer for the Historic Village of Cooperstown, New York, as well as a member of the zoning board of appeals for my village of Westford. For five years, I worked as a project manager for a successful design-build company on both residential and commercial projects.

I first began my timber framing career on a handshake in the driveway of a project that was wrapping in Bellingham, Washington. I told the project leader that I would sweep floors, if necessary, to have the opportunity to learn the trade. He replied, "Oh no, we'll put a saw in your hand, and we all sweep the floors." It was an honor to learn from and work with that crew from 2004 to 2014 on so many amazing projects. It was their support that saw me through the Apprenticeship Training Program (ATP) to become a journeyworker.

As a lifetime member of the Guild and graduate of the ATP, I truly value the teaching and learning opportunities offered by timber framing. The partnership with the Heartwood School is of paramount importance for the Guild and the ATP right now. I look forward to seeing this relationship flourish—exemplifying the highest aspiration of the Guild's mission.

I see the fostering of opportunities to connect with individuals, organizations, and communities to highlight our work and the maintenance of these connections as fundamental to the Guild.

I've been fortunate to take part in numerous Community Building Workshops over the years as well as projects with Handhouse Studio, Charpentiers sans Frontières, and others.

Some career highlights for me are:

- Gwozdziec synagogue with MassArt, Handhouse Studio, TF Guild, Museum of the History of Polish Jews. Warsaw, Poland.
- Traditional Estonian Smoke Sauna, NGO Vanaajamaja (UNESCO Intangible Heritage) Estonia.
- Educational Blacksmithing workshop, Mortise and Tenon Magazine, Charpentiers sans Frontières, Sedgewick, Maine.
- Notre Dame Truss #6, Handhouse Studio, Catholic University of America, with the support of Charpentiers sans Frontières. Washington, DC.

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Al Wallace

I have been a member of the Timber Framers Guild for three decades and served on the Board of Directors during several critical milestones in the Guild history. These include updating our website to the modern platform you see today, architecting the Visionary Partners Program (VPP) to address critical cash flow issues, terminating our relationship with an abusive management company, opening a west coast office, and incorporating the Timber Frame Business Council within TFG governance.

Our current challenges present significant opportunities for success. I believe the TFG should return to our roots creating “Guild magic” for our members through expanded conferences and community building projects. These events generate substantial much-needed revenue while providing educational opportunities for developing meaningful relationships between members and the communities we serve. This approach should be symbiotic with the investment the Guild has made in the Heartwood School. With the additional revenue, we can ensure consistent delivery of TFG publications which provide value to our members and VPP friends. Considering these objectives, I feel strongly that a new executive director should have a passion for community outreach and be skilled in recruiting and overseeing contract project managers and staff. Should I have the privilege to serve again as a TFG Director, my efforts will be focused on achieving these goals.

Though I live in a net-zero hybrid timber frame home, I am not a timber framer. I do have extensive experience developing and supervising volunteers engaged in international community service projects. My experience in timber framing is limited to working as a volunteer at a dozen or so Guild projects, attending the Gewerbe Akademie in Rottweil, Germany, investigating the construction methods of timber frame churches in Poland, and hosting a team of timber framers to build a hospital wing in Pucusana, Peru. I have also volunteered as an instructor at TFG conferences on subjects involving building science, sustainable heating and cooling systems with geothermal heat pumps, and teaching the popular seminar “MBA in a Day.”

I’m on my third career. Beginning as an Air Force fighter pilot, I then transitioned to working for high tech software and networking companies in technical support and sales. While I am formally trained as an engineer and an architect with an MBA, my most recent passion has been as the founder of a service-disabled veteran-owned small business developing, designing, and installing systems which provide sustainable heating, cooling and indoor air quality systems for net zero and low energy buildings. I have been fortunate to have been awarded four US patents for geothermal systems with radiant floor cooling and heating. I served as past president of the Colorado Heat Pump Association and Director of E*Star Colorado and am licensed by the Colorado Department of Water Resources for geothermal systems. I am a current member of the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers and the Association of Energy Engineers. My formal education includes a BS degree in Aeronautical Engineering from the US Air Force Academy, an MBA from Golden Gate University in California, and Master's Degrees in Architecture and Landscape Architecture from the University of Colorado at Denver with Certificates in Design/Build and Historic Preservation.

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Sal Wilson



In 2009, I cut my house, it was my first frame and I had little in the way of experience or insight. It went together well enough and left me feeling somewhat confident. Years later, I joined the Guild and took part in my first Guild project. I was a bit hesitant and the experience was intense and not what I expected. It opened doors to new concepts and I haven't looked back. The shared enthusiasm of timber framers is contagious. The details of the craft are endless and tell a story. Now, I run my own humble timber frame company in Arkansas and travel quite a bit between various shops and projects.

The Guild has given me so much, in both education and comradery. I have come to greatly admire its members and their work. To me the members are its greatest asset. The Guild's community building projects are culminations of our best attributes. I see these as a window into the organization and its members and I want them to thrive... plain and simple.

- I want to see its members pushed to places they haven't quite gone before.
- I want to see the Guild do projects beyond our borders again.
- I want to see us work in concert with other trade guilds and artists.
- I want to see the Guild increase our accessibility and diversity.

Lastly, I believe strongly that the Guild needs to ensure that its projects be mission-driven with the strongest possible focus on craft.

At the end of the day the Guild is its members. I've seen many of them travel very far and work for free. This is a big deal. Why wouldn't I want to be part of a team like that?

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