



Envisioning Evolution: Alternative Paths to Success in Timber Framing

Christian Gudmand (Hardwick Post & Beam)

Matt Hunter (Ashland Post & Beam)

Stephen Morrison (MoreSun Custom Woodworking, Inc.)

Ariel Schechter (Timber Homes Vermont)

Autumn Peterson (Heritage Natural Finishes, LLC)

Michael Cuba, Moderator (Knobb Hill Joinery)

The current economic and regulatory environment presents both challenges and opportunities for those endeavoring to run a business or make a career in timber framing. As an inherently creative group of craftspeople, many of us find that tried-and-true formulas for prosperity in business don't always fit our own visions of what it means to be successful. We are looking for a conversation between folks who have been in the trade for several years and looking to plan for the long-term career, whether it is starting a new business, changing a current business model or moving up in your current employment.

This session will use a roundtable format to catalyze and facilitate discussion about roads less traveled in developing careers and businesses in the timber framing industry today. We will discuss strategies; when and how to work with other timber framing professionals; when to take risks and when to cut losses; how to find, train, and retain good employees; and more. We are hopeful that attendees will participate and help to guide the direction of the discussion. Our goal is to broaden the context in which we view opportunities to apply our creativity and grow sustainable businesses.

About the Speakers

Michael Cuba (moderator)

Michael Cuba is a co-founder of Knobb Hill Joinery, a historic preservation company in northern Vermont focused on traditional restorative joinery techniques. He also runs Transom HPC, a small consulting firm offering dendrochronology coring services, research, and documentation for historic timbered structures. Michael is an active member of the Traditional Timber Frame Research Advisory Group and currently serves as a member of the Timber Framers Guild Board of Directors.

Christian Gudmand

Christian Gudmand was educated as a Mechanical Engineer and spent 3 years after college working on a mix of renewable energy projects as well as military contracts. After seeing an opportunity pop up at Hardwick Post and Beam to jump on the bench and start cutting timbers he quickly applied and crossed his fingers. A few weeks later, he left his engineering life and made his way to Manchester for his first TFG conference! After a year of banging chisels and making chips (not nearly enough time), Mr. Gudmand got thrust into running HPB, which he has been doing that since.

Matt Hunter

Matt was first introduced to timber framing in Santa Fe, New Mexico, as an extension of his study of natural building and permaculture. A move to Oregon and 8+ years in the industry had him working his way up from novice to shop foreman and lead timber framer. In 2014, Matt started Ashland Post & Beam to focus on responsible material sourcing and to bring timber framing to a wider audience.

Stephen Morrison

Stephen Morrison came from a broad background in woodworking that included furniture making, cabinetry, timber frame construction, and residential carpentry. With a passion for woodworking and experience working for others (and naive dreams!), Stephen went into business for himself, founding MoreSun Custom Woodworking, Inc. He wears many hats: boss, designer, timber framer, sawyer, errand boy, and self-promoter.

Being the owner of the business means he's never really "off" work these days. And of course, he now serves as Vice President on the TFG Board of Directors and as Chair of the Community Building Project Committee. However, he still makes time for enjoying the outdoors with his family, especially on the Chattooga River. His latest hobby is beekeeping, and he's hoping his new hive will stay alive.

Autumn Peterson

Autumn Peterson was trained as a timber framer and designer and has since moved into making natural oil-based wood finishes. Her company is Heritage Natural Finishes (formerly Land Ark NW) and she is currently serving on the Board of Directors of the Timber Framers Guild. She lives in the stunning rural landscape of Boulder, Utah.

Ariel Schecter

Ariel Schecter has a background in structural engineering and sculpture, and became hooked on timber framing about five years back. He is grateful to have had a string of fantastic teachers, employers, and projects that have shaped his craft and passion. Mr. Schecter particularly enjoys physical processes like building with floor drawings, scribing, and developed drawing, cherishing opportunities to explore these old lineages of technique. Prior to joining the crew for the Moosilauke Ravine Lodge, he designed and executed his first full-size timber frame house, built entirely with plumb line scribes on local timbers, on a rural jobsite with only hand tools and no electricity.