

All the news about fits
 August 2002

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Log Building NEWS

Air out the sleeping bag and pack up the marshmallows—Rendez-vous plans are set

Ready to Rendez-vous? The ILBA Fall Rendez-vous is just around the corner and it's time to make plans to attend.

This family camping event will have something for everyone: log builder competitions, speakers and presentations, wood carving workshops, tool demonstrations and some great outdoor cooking.

Join us on Friday afternoon, Oct. 11, 2002, through Monday morning, Oct. 14, 2002 at the Gold Panner Campground in Cherryville, B.C. Just 37 miles East of Vernon on Hwy #6, the site is an hour's drive from the Kelowna, B.C. airport.

The campground offers creek fishing, camping, hiking, historical sightseeing, Cherry Creek gold mine tours, on-site restaurant, showers and toilets; power hook-ups and laundry facilities are available.

The event starts on Friday at 4 p.m. with the Log Builder Competition followed by a great dinner and evening campfire entertainment. On Saturday you'll begin the day with campfire coffee, followed by a full weekend of great food and workshops supplied by your association.

Bring your family, your co-workers, your tent, trailer or camper and be prepared to enjoy some warm fellowship and great networking at this camp out weekend.

You'll enjoy these and other special events:

Keynote address

Mary Mackie, the "founding mother" of this association, brings this gathering full circle and will proudly share where we

came from as well as her thoughts on where we're going. This Rendez-vous is like a homecoming, and our "mother" just has to be there!

French Scribe

Pre-Conference Workshop

Frédéric Brillant's encore presentation of traditional timber frame layout and joinery will have you throwing out your calculators

and reaching for a bow saw. Be there, or be square. Further details and registration for this workshop will be on the ILBA Web site.

Benefit Auction

Join us to raise money for a good

cause and have some great laughs in the process. We have items guaranteed to raise your eyebrows and others to enhance your business. We welcome all donations for the event—from Grandma's homemade socks to the latest in jigs and tools.

Log Builder Competition

Following the Gold Medal competition we held in Park City this past April, we will again offer great prizes and a guaranteed fun time at this competition. Register early upon your arrival and pick up a copy of the new rules and regulations.

Tech Talk

Join the jig thinkers in our industry, who create better ways to get the job done! There's so much to learn and opportunities to observe these great inventions are rare—don't miss this workshop.

Mitered Truss Workshop

Improve the function and strength of



Rendez-vous—Continued on Page 15

Letters

TO THE EDITOR



Member offers alternative to steel and wood pinning

To the editor:

I have been building handcrafted log homes for 26 years across many parts of Canada. One thing I promoted at the very beginning was the practice of pinning all the log walls. I totally believed in using wood dowelling: if homes have stood for hundreds of years with wood, why change?

In the '70s and '80s one saw the use of steel pegging, mostly of cheap rebar. Take a ¾" piece of rebar and you can bend it over your knee. What sort of strength is that?

I kept using the 2" and 1½" fir. We lost many a contract over the cost difference of labour and materials between us and others that used ½" rebar. The sad thing is that today it is still being used and should be banned from our trade.

Over the last 15 years many of our contracts have consisted of renovating 10- to 30-year-old log homes. That includes refurbishing all the wood surfaces inside and out, constructing additions and placement of larger windows and doors. I could write a book about the things I have seen!

I have seen rot over one inch larger than the original peg size from the use of steel pins. We all know that this is the result of the convection of warm meeting cold and causing condensation.

When people ask for steel pinning—and they still do—I tell them

to look at old siding or buildings with nails or spikes; you can pull them out with your fingers. That is what is going to happen in your walls if I use steel, I tell them. They usually get the point.

We all have or are forced to have through-bolting. I still don't like it. If we can, we run a PVC sleeve down the hole first to allow moisture to flow to the bottom.

Last year I worked on another company's 6-month-old building. The opening in the doors had deflected over four inches already. The walls were not pinned. What do we do about the companies that, to this day, do not pin their walls?

I no longer use wood dowel pinning, having switched to fiberglass rods. They are as smooth as glass, deadly accurate and have unbelievable strength. These days, there's very little price difference between 1" rod and 1½" wood. Fiberglass does not convect like steel, it comes in all the shapes that steel does and there is no rust; it's great for deck beams, etc. I use fiberglass where angle iron is called for in door and window openings. It's easy to drill, dado, etc. It also comes in fiber bolt; it's pricey, but if, as a group, there is demand the price may go down and it could replace the use of steel bolting altogether.

Sincerely,
John Plowman
NorthWood Log Homes

The Log Building News welcomes letters from the members of the ILBA. Letters will be edited for clarity, length and libelous content. Letters must be signed by the author and include a phone number and/or email address in the event the writer must be contacted. Send letters to Bettyann Moore, N8879 Cty. Hwy.Y, Seymour, WI 54165 USA or email them to betiam@athenet.net.

Log Building

NEWS

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Greetings from your new *Log Building News* editor



Bettyann Moore

I've never liked writing about myself, so you won't have to put up with much of that in these pages. The Powers That Be at the ILBA have asked me to

introduce myself, however, so you'll have to bear with me just this once.

About three weeks after I became editor of *Log Home Design Ideas* magazine back in 1996, I found myself in an airplane headed to Vancouver, BC. I was going to my first log home show. You could put what I knew about log homes in a thimble and still have room for a fingertip.

Seven years prior to that, as the new editor of a weekly newspaper, I knew little about small town politics or the business of newspapers either; most things are best learned in prac-

tice rather than theory.

Just as my first city council meeting was a great introduction to small town newspapering, that first log home show was a good way to begin my log home education and my rise to publisher. And, believe me, it was much more interesting than the city council meeting.

I met a lot of great people in those few days. The Canadian "loggies" with their shy, earthy candor helped me make the leap into an industry I came to love. They exuded an independent spirit the likes of which I'd never encountered.

Since then, I've attended too many log home shows and conventions to count. And last year I left the magazine. At first I thought I'd like to stay in the magazine industry, but as more and more people asked me to do their newsletters, brochures and other projects, I decided to strike out

on my own. That independent spirit of the loggies I met along the way must have rubbed off on me more than I thought.

After all, they are doing what they love to do and doing it for themselves. Their only bosses are Mother Nature and their customers. My boss is a black and white cat named Cowboy who demands belly rubs at regular intervals throughout the day. I'm happy to comply.

It's been great fun working with Cathy, Ann and Robert on my first issue of the *LBN*. This is *your* newsletter and I look forward to receiving your input, articles and photos.

There's also a conspiracy afoot to get me to the Fall Rendez-vous, so I hope to meet or become reacquainted with some of you there. The event promises to be both fun and educational ... as long as I don't have to polka.

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Where is the truth?

Thermal properties of log homes

By Dalibor Houdek, Ph.D.
Forintek Canada Corp.

In the last few years, as I became more involved with ILBA, I noticed an increased number of requests for reliable technical information on the thermal performance of log homes.

As I studied this topic I came across various reports and articles that said everything from "log homes are very energy efficient" to "log homes are energy inefficient." So, what is the truth? Are log homes energy efficient or not?

While there is no definitive answer to such a general question (considering the number of various log building systems), I will bring up some points to help you understand the basics and the complexity of the problem.

The energy efficiency of a home is determined by so-called R-values (resistance to thermal flow) of building segments such as walls, floors,

roof, windows, etc., and by the air tightness of the building envelope. In log homes (and other heavy structures) there is also the heat mass that influences the heat-holding ability of the structure, thus influencing heating bills.

Let's start with the basics. Log homes are made of wood (well, parts of the walls are anyway). The cross section of the log under the microscope appears like a bundle of straws. Those "straws" are filled with air when the moisture content of the wood is lower than so-called fiber saturation point (somewhere around 28 percent).

It is common knowledge that air is a very good thermal insulator, and the more layers of air in the system, the better its insulating properties. Therefore, wood seems like an ideal material to separate the warm and cozy interior of your house from the freezing winter conditions outside, right? Bigger is not always better

except in log walls, where the thicker wall provides better thermal performance. At least the R-value (thermal resistance) of the wall will be higher. By the way, even in this case the larger the number, the better the wall should perform. I am using *should* because it is only one of the features needed to achieve energy efficiency.

Thermal resistivity of different softwood species varies, but not significantly. Generally speaking, the higher the wood density, the lower the thermal resistivity. In the following table, please compare the R-values of common wood species used in log construction. Values in this table are approximate and should be used with caution; actual conductivities may vary by as much as 20 percent. Note that the resistivity increases with decreasing moisture content. The specific gravities also may not represent species averages.

Comparing thermal resistivity of 1" of wood (ranging approximately between 1-1.5) with 0.00067 for aluminum, 0.0032 for steel, 0.167 for concrete, or 0.143 for glass indicates that wood is not doing all that badly. Even when comparing wood to mineral wool insulation with a resistivity of approximately 4, the wood is still quite competitive.

It is apparent that the logs used for log homes are only as large as is practical for a log builder. In my experience the majority of companies use logs averaging between 12-16 inches in diameter at midrange. That, combined with the average width of the lateral groove between ranging between 2-4 inches, almost predetermines the maximum R-value one can expect from such a log wall.

Table 1 Thermal Resistivity of Various Softwood Species Used in Log Construction.

Wood Species	Specific Gravity	Thermal Resistivity (h·ft ² ·°F/Btu·in)	
		Oven dry	At 12% MC
Western Red Cedar	0.33	1.7	1.5
White Spruce	0.37	1.6	1.3
Eastern White Pine	0.37	1.6	1.3
Western White Pine	0.40	1.5	1.2
Lodgepole Pine	0.43	1.4	1.2
Eastern Red Cedar	0.48	1.3	1.1
Red Pine	0.46	1.3	1.1
Douglas Fir	0.51	1.2	1

(Source: Wood Handbook-Wood as an Engineering Material, USDA, 1999)

The National Research Council of Canada (NRC) conducted a study¹ on R-values of log walls for the National Energy Code in 1996. To facilitate the calculation of the R-value for log walls using a simple hand calculation, the NRC introduced an adjustment factor called "profile factor" to accommodate the profile of scribed log wall (thickness of the wall at the joints is less than the diameter of the logs). The profile factor for scribed fit log walls was found to be dependent on the log diameter and the wall joint detail and to range between 0.7 and 0.84. The air close to the wall (Interior and exterior) contributes to the total R-value of the wall by approximately 0.88.

The R-value of a round scribed wall can be then calculated by using following equation;

$$R\text{-value} = [(\text{mean log diameter} \times \text{wood resistivity}) + \text{resistivity of air films}] \times \text{profile factor}$$

It is important to understand that this very simple calculation is based on numerous simplifications and assumptions (e.g. disregards the contribution of the mineral insulation in the lateral groove). Therefore, the results should be used with caution.

Here I want to share a story with you. Once I was approached to provide technical information to a builder who was "questioned" by the building official regarding the R-values of log walls. The builder sent me a slick computer-generated picture of a log house that I would put in the category of a "glass structure with a log infill." Beautiful home, but what kind of R-values are we talking about here? One half of the house was made of material (windows) that has thermal properties equivalent to 2" thick cedar blank. In that case, the importance of R-values of log homes was overestimated.

According to research studies con-

ducted in Canada and the US^{2,3}, the heat loss through handcrafted log walls represents approximately 17 percent of total loss for the structure. On the other hand, the air infiltration/leakage can account for up to 50 percent of all heating losses in a handcrafted, chinkless log home. Although the reports are not conclusive, the pattern for a large population of homes is quite clear.

The lateral joints were not identified as the main pathways for the air infiltration/leakage but, rather, each of the following items were shown to account for larger portions of the



Dalibor Houdek

Thermal Properties—Continued on Page 6



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Thermal Properties

—Continued from Page 5—

total heat loss :

- the ridge area of vaulted ceilings
- the joint between the plate log and the roof
- the protrusions of logs through the exterior walls (both frame and log)
- the connections between the floor and a sill log
- the connection of the log wall with the frame wall
- the window/door-to-wall log interfaces
- the log-corner interface.

It is very important to pay attention to these structural details during design and construction, as they make a large difference in overall energy efficiency of a log structure. It was shown that gasketed walls with tightened through-bolts perform better than those just using fiberglass, and that exterior/interior chinking reduces air infiltration even further.

Last, is the issue of thermal mass; a difficult subject to address.

While it is a relatively simple exercise to calculate the thermal mass (heat storing capacity) of a log wall, it is rather difficult to estimate how this affects the overall energy consumption of a particular building. Nevertheless, the effect of heat mass was confirmed by long-term testing in a study⁴ conducted by the US Department of Commerce.

In the 28 week-long test, the test house with nominal R-10 log walls “consumed” the same amount of energy as a light frame building of the same size and shape with walls rated

R-12. It was determined that the log wall performed 17 percent better than its calculated rating and it was concluded that the relatively large thermal mass of log wall is an energy-conserving feature.

The Model Energy Code (CABO 1992) gives log walls thermal mass credits but these credits are dependent on the site specifics and regional climatic conditions, including Heating-Degree-Days (HDD).



According to the Model Energy Code, a building in a climate that has a 6600 HDD (for example Buffalo, NY, falls into the category of 6500-8000 HDD) must have walls with a combined U-value of 0.12⁵. The combined U-value is reciprocal to summation of the R-values of each component in the walls—doors and windows included. This means that the required combined R-value for a house in that particular region is R-8.3. For buildings with a significant amount of mass (at least 20 lb. per square foot of the wall) the combined R-value in these climactic conditions (6500-8000 HDD) can be lowered to R-7.7. This means that the log walls are given the thermal mass credit of about 8 percent.

In reality, it means that the R-value of the log wall is granted a credit of 8 percent to acknowledge the effect of thermal mass. For example, in the climactic region with only 2000 HDD, the thermal mass credit would be as high as 42 percent.

The idea of combined R-value for the wall including the windows and doors seems very logical to ensure conservative estimation of heat consumption in a particular environment. However, it can also be a cause of the problem that many log builders have experienced. If the house has half of the wall area filled with high efficiency windows (R-3 would be a very good window) the rest of the wall has to be “beefed up” to bring the overall combined R-value to the required level.

As you can see, this whole issue of thermal properties of log homes is quite complicated due primarily to the influence of many factors. Additional research is clearly needed in order to better understand these complex relationships between materials and construction methods.

ILBA is currently pursuing several initiatives to address the technical issues of the log building industry and Thermal Performance will definitely be one of them.

References

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- ³ Stephen Klossner: Energy Related Performance Testing of Minnesota Log Homes, 1990.
- ⁴ A Field Study of the Effect on Wall Mass on the Heating and Cooling Loads of Residential Buildings, National Bureau of Standards, 1982.
- ⁵ Thomas Gorman: The Thermal Performance of Log Home Walls, Wood Design Focus, Fall 1995.

They shoot houses, don't they?

By Nancy Wilkins

You might be entering that period when you set the budget and plan for the coming year. I'd like to take this opportunity to be the squeaky wheel that says, this year set a chunk aside for some excellent photography.

If there's one single investment in your marketing plan that will continue to pay off for the life of your company, it's high quality photographs. Consider your photo file to be the solid foundation on which your marketing program is built. If you have high quality photos, you can be proactive, approaching magazines of all types to feature your work. You can be readily responsive—several times each year I field and forward requests from magazines for good photos to illustrate an article in progress, or for a new article accompanied by good photos. You can develop creative marketing practices in which you use photo compilations of previous houses to sell your product to new clients. But you can't do any of that if you don't have top quality photos.

As in the rest of home building, the bar has been raised over the years on what is the expected level of photographic excellence. You should plan to budget for large format shots—use a minimum of 2¼" format, but 4" x 5" will give you a better photo and more options down the road for how you use it. I'm sorry to say that no matter how great a photographer you may be with a 35 mm camera, there are adjustments a professional can make with the larger format cameras that blow the 35mm away.

If you have never worked with a professional photographer, there are several ways to begin shopping for one. Look through magazines and find the photo credits on the pictures you really like. Talk to other home builders and find out what their experience is. When you do find a person



Leave the photography up to the pros for years of marketing value. (Photo by Brian Lloyd)

whose work you like, ask if they will share travel costs with other companies—that's a way to save quite a bit on a shoot. At least one photographer I work with sends out a calendar of their travel schedule early in the year, so companies can plan to join in on an existing shoot in an area where they have a home to be photographed.

Personally, if you have a limited budget, I would recommend selecting one house to shoot, and photograph it as thoroughly as you can, rather than taking a shotgun approach. For your money, you'll get more high quality photos, and you'll have a theme running through your photos that will make them more appealing to a viewer. Several photos of one home also open the door to doing an article on that home—find the story that makes that home or homeowner unique, develop an article and send it off to magazines.

Pay attention to the interior styling—it's not at all unheard of to take out some of the furniture in the house and replace it with something

that complements a photograph better. Of course, this has to be handled diplomatically with the client! But there are many small changes that can be made to improve the styling in a photograph. Check with your photographer and make sure they plan to take care of this—or arrange either to do it yourself, if you have a really good eye for interior design, or hire someone who does.

If you get a chance, it's quite an education to tag along on a photo shoot day. You will be amazed at what a real pro goes through to create those incredible photographs. I was going to say it's a lot of fun — but I'll change that adjective to interesting. Sometimes it feels a bit like watching grass grow, as they fiddle and fuss, and take two hours to get one shot just right. But you'll find yourself using that shot for many years, and it will pay for itself many times over.

Nancy Wilkins is the Executive Director of the Timber Frame Business Council in Hamilton, Mont. This article first appeared in the Feb. 2002 issue of Scantlings, the Timber Framers Guild Newsletter. It is used with permission.

A picture's worth ...

By Bettyann Moore

Reading Nancy Wilkins' article about photographing homes brought to mind a number of memorable photo shoot experiences. But more vividly, it reminded me of some of the misconceptions surrounding log home photography that I've encountered over the years. This isn't intended as a stroll down Memory Lane, but rather as a complement to what Ms. Wilkins has already shared.

You wouldn't hand over your jig and drawknife to just anyone and expect them to know how to use them. The same holds true of a camera when it comes to shooting great photos of your best work.

A log home company owner once said to me, "Photographers are a

dime a dozen." Can you guess how many of his homes were featured in a magazine? That's right, none. Unwilling to set aside a portion of his budget to pay an architectural photographer, he missed out on some terrific marketing mileage.

Of course, having a home featured on the pages of a glossy magazine isn't the end all to be all, but even one well-photographed home in your portfolio can make a world of difference to how your customers perceive your company.

When having a home photographed, keep in mind that even though you, as a builder, may be tickled pink about that fine notching job, most potential home buyers want to picture themselves in a nicely appointed, well-crafted home.

And though most companies like to shoot and show off their biggest, most complicated projects, the vast percentage of home buyers want to see simple, small homes.

And they don't want to see them over and over again in every magazine they pick up. Magazines serve two masters: their readers and their advertisers. But no one's interests are served when

the same home is trotted out time after time after time.

The cost of a single photo shoot starts at about \$1,800 and goes up from there. The average is about \$2,800.

People who have never had a home photographed invariably say, "Gee, you must get a heck of a lot of shots for that price!"

Um ... no. What you get is a TOTAL of 10-16 shots. As Nancy Wilkins pointed out, a photo shoot is a long, drawn out process. She called it "interesting." I call it work.

Having assisted on many photo shoots, I can attest that professional photographers earn every penny they charge. At day's end—and most full shoots last an entire day—all you want is a comfortable chair and a suitable beverage.

I once stood out on a frozen lake in sub-zero weather for two hours waiting for that "just right" light of dusk. I lost feeling in my fingers and toes long before the moment arrived. I wished the photographer well and headed inside.

While the log home company rep and I warmed our toes by the fireplace, we saw car lights sweep past the window; the owner was home. We held our breath, hoping that the arrival didn't coincide with that "just right" moment. Seconds later, shouted curses filled the frigid air. We learned later that the home owner had unkenneled her dog, which had promptly bounded across the pristine snow in search of that "just right" tree. The dog's timing couldn't have been worse.



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Nevertheless, the shot was magnificent. The log home company was thrilled with the entire shoot, as were the home owners and I. It's doubtful the dog cared one way or another.

My apologies for the aside, but I couldn't resist telling that particular story as it illustrates the lengths a good photographer—and a crazy magazine publisher—will go to get the perfect shot. That sort of attention to detail works in everyone's favor in the long run.

As Nancy Wilkins says, you can get a lot of mileage out of a photo shoot; they're well worth the price. Very often the price will include usage rights for reprints and/or advertising, though every photographer has a different policy.

Some of you are asking: What's this about usage rights? Don't I own those photos if I've paid for the shoot? If I don't own them, who does?

Generally, the photographer does, but that depends on what you've negotiated with them up front. Most will sell the copyright but that price is above and beyond what you have spent already. If the photographer retains the copyright, you're still likely to get more mileage from the shoot because it will become part of the photographer's "stock photo" file and may be sold time and time again to other publications, even ones outside the log home market.

Policies vary, of course, but generally magazines don't buy unlimited rights to the photos, purchasing only one-time usage rights. They will frequently dip into a photographer's stock photos to illustrate a particular article. The price is steep for individual stock photos, which are generally priced by how large they will appear in the magazine. And if the shot is to

be used on the cover, the magazine pays a premium price.

Photo shoots are commissioned in a variety of ways:

- A log home company calls a photographer, arranging and paying for the entire shoot and negotiating usage rights.
- A magazine editor will call a photographer to find out which area of the country or world they'll be traveling in and then call log home companies to see if they have any homes they'd like shot in that area.
- The photographer will call log home companies to let them know where they're traveling, secure "scouting shots" (usually simple 35mm photos) of prospective homes and send the scouting to the magazines to see if there's any interest.
- A log home company sends scouting shots directly to the magazine hoping it will take on the project as well as the cost. Sometimes the magazine will co-op (share) the costs with the company.

Some log home companies hire PR firms that specialize in strategic photo feature and article placement, or they use someone in-house. Either way, they pay someone else to handle all the details, leaving them free to concentrate on building homes.

- Readers may send the magazine scouting shots of their own homes and maybe a note about its unusual



or special features. I like these shoots; the home owners willingly open their homes and make for good interviews.

- It's rare, but sometimes an ancillary product supplier—like chinking or finish companies, etc.—will call a magazine to let them know about a great home on which their product was used. They may or may not co-op the shoot.

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Get out those PhD* cameras—ILBA photo contest is on

*Press HERE, Dummy!

The ILBA wants to see your photos ... no, not the ones of Fido drinking out of the toilet bowl or Uncle Fred wearing the lampshade. We're offering prizes for those pictures that tell us something about your work.

Maybe you carved some incredible notches you're particularly proud of. Or perhaps your crew outdid itself on a stairway.

Check out the categories below and submit your photos today. But hurry, they will be judged by your peers at Rendez-vous in October. Outstanding prizes will go to the winners in each category and the winning photos will appear in upcoming issues of the *Log Building News*.

Categories

- Neat notches
- Creative carving

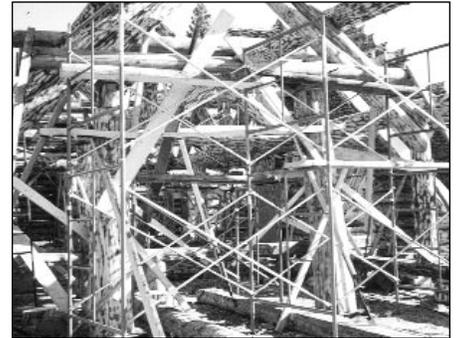
- Outstanding openings
- Terrific trusses
- Sensational stairs & railings
- Great gazebos
- Out of the ordinary
- Crew shots
- Builders with attitude
- Picnic tables (3 angle shots)

Send your photos to: International Log Builders' Association, P.O. Box 775, Lumby, B.C., V0E 2G0, Canada.

Rules

Submitted photos may be black & white or color, but must not be the work of a professional photographer. They must be received in the ILBA office by Monday, Oct. 7, 2002.

Please include the photographer's name and company name on the back



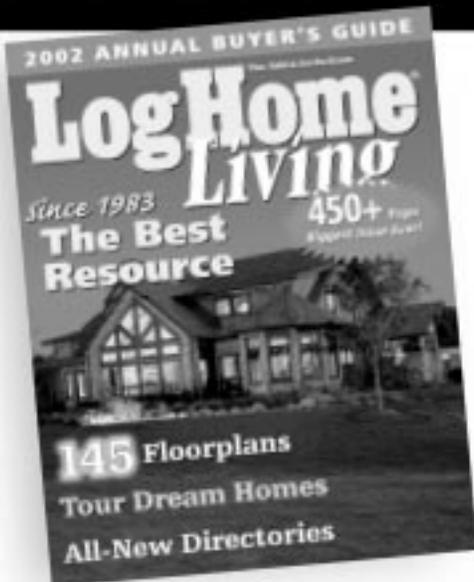
There's no category for this shot, but it certainly shows an intricate web of wood. (Bettyann Moore photo)

and note the entry category. (Avoid using paper clips and stacking photos face-to-back; ink from the back of one photo will mar the face of the next.)

Companies may submit one entry per category.

Photos will be judged and prizes awarded at Rendez-vous. The photographer need not be present to win.

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Hats off to Chambers

By Lloyd Beckedorf

I first met Robert Chambers in the early 1980s when he was a student of mine at the B. Allan Mackie School of Log Building. I remember his inability to accept the common answer: "That's the way it has always been done."

Robert, today as then, has always wanted to get to the root of things, to know if there was a better way, to know if whether the way we do things today in log construction is based on sound principles. That alone, I feel, has made Robert an excellent editor of the *Log Building News*.

He leaves some really big shoes to fill, (I know this to be fact as I bought a pair of his shoes at the AGM of the Log Builders' Association in Sorrento B.C. in the early 1990s) and he will be missed from the pages of the *News* along with his wit and log construction education, which is second to none.

Robert has also been very instrumental in creating and keeping close ties between the Great Lakes Log Builders,

the Rocky Mountain Log Builders, the Latvian Log Builders and the New Zealand Log Builders with the International Log Builders' Association. I think the success and support worldwide of the International Log Builders' Association can largely be considered part of the efforts of Robert Chambers.

And a note to Rob Chambers from the new editor of the *Log Building News*:

Muchas gracias, amigo, for all the help you've given the new kid on the block. Thanks, too, for laying a solid foundation for this publication. Good luck in New Zealand and whenever you get a hankering for brats and cheese curds, give me a holler; I'll see what I can do.



Rob Chambers

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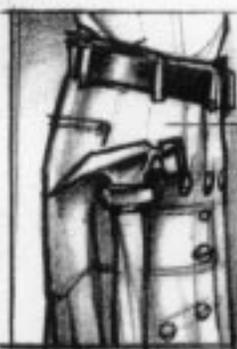


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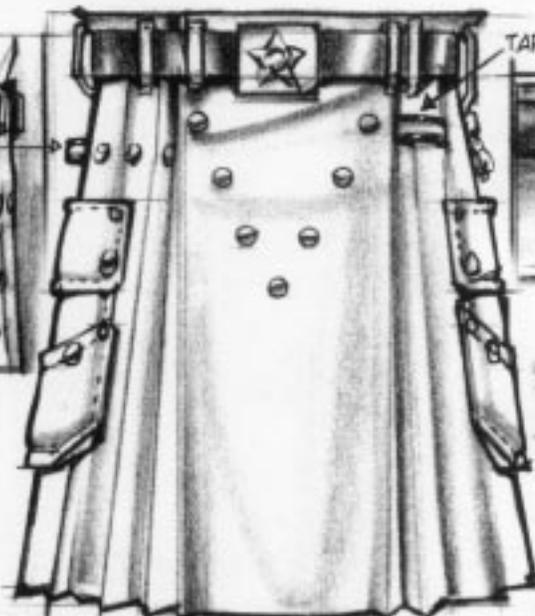
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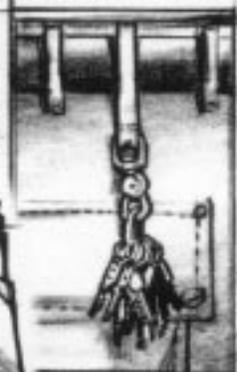
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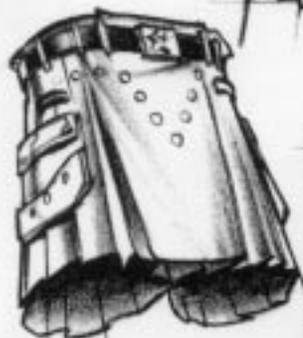
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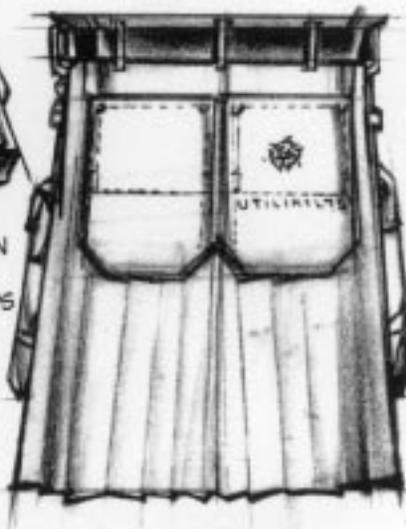
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Log Building (R)evolution

By Robert Savignac

Building with logs is not a new concept. Any of us with the least bit of interest has sifted through the pages of Hermann Phleps' book "The Craft of Log Building" and has been inspired by the degree of craftsmanship and attention to detail depicted by the illustrations. This is work accomplished by masters whose knowledge of wood dynamics, its form and function, are a matter of art as well as science. There were no legislated building codes to adhere to. It was incumbent of the craftsman, intimate in this craft, to execute the best work according to their abilities and understanding of the task at hand. There is also a matter of pride, where extra effort is shown off by embellishment and extraordinary details that become the signature of a particular log builder. Many of today's modern log builders subscribe to the Scandinavian and Eastern European methods depicted in Phleps' book.

For thousands of years, building with logs has survived housing revolutions, and still challenges big industry with its high energy, resource-depleting manufacture of steel, concrete and plastic housing components. The use of logs as a renewable resource keeps resurfacing even in areas where deforestation occurred so long ago, that no one would even consider the likelihood of building log homes.

Divers apparently have found remnants of log structures on the bottom of the Black Sea, some 80 to 100 feet down. History will tell us that three great rivers drained into the Black Sea, the Danube, the Dnjepr and the Volga. It was at the same time that the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea were at the same level, connected by the Sea of Azou. The icecap on the continent reached its highest point about 18,000 years ago and since retreated very slowly until about 14,000 years ago. Up until that time, the Black Sea must have been mostly dry with a river through it, draining the little melt water there

was into the Bosphorous. Then the great melt came, so great that soon the world's oceans rose at a rate of 10cm per year, most of that water coming off the Eurasian continent. The Black Sea rose higher than its present level and formed the lake we know today. These structures at the bottom of the sea must therefore be approximately 14,000 to 15,000 years old!

Today, we receive inquiries from Turkey asking if log buildings would be feasible there ... after 15,000 years, it is still not a dying concept! The use of logs is often overlooked, and without the proper understanding of its attributes and methods of joinery, many opportunities are being overlooked.

A student of architecture, working in Kenya on the Sustainable Cities Program/Habitat at the UN headquarters, recently met with villagers on Mt. Kenya who are very interested in using wood again as their building material.

At the moment, the trend is to cut down the local forests, sell the timber in Nairobi and buy stone which must be transported from afar to build their villages. There's something wrong with this picture!

In my own experience teaching and consulting to First Nations on our own continent, I've also learned of a long pre-existing history of log construction, particularly on the West coast. Long houses and pit houses have been in use for 1000s of years. Although not the typical type of horizontal log stacking we ascribe to today's log homes, people all around the world have refined techniques to using the most renewable and accessible materials available, and where there are forests, there are log homes. Today, our own aboriginal neighbours are often struggling to meet housing

demands, while standing deep in the woods!

It is important for us to act individually and as an international collective, to promote the continuance and perpetuity of our craft. There is not a corner of the globe that has not expressed an interest in the understanding and construction of log homes—from the Arctic to Patagonia, Africa, Australia, all throughout Europe and Pacific Rim countries, log homes are there! Is it a revolution? Are people indeed fighting for a choice in home construction that defies today's convention of quick-built homes that are not carved from the greatest renewable building resource on earth?

The ILBA, in keeping with our mandate, promotes the highest standards of log construction and seeks to educate the public and professionals alike

(R)evolution—Continued on page 14



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(R)evolution

—Continued from Page 13—

in the art and science of log building. It is important that every member of our association be dedicated to this same cause, since there seems to be so many detractors against the use of logs today—all founded on misinformation, assumptions and poor craftsmanship. It's always the bad examples that gain more notoriety.

A recent brief published by the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Clearinghouse (EREC) for the US Department of Energy reveals that "Log homes are notorious for large air leaks ... these air leaks can easily account for more than 30 percent of a typical heating bill." It is no wonder log homes today are not given serious consideration overall. I would hope that we know better!

A quick glance at some of the log home "chat sites" on the Internet also confirms there's a lot of assumptions and misinformation based on a lack of

standards and craftsmanship.

It is important that each of us continue our own education and development as log builders, so we can answer the distraught and confused perspective of today's log home enthusiast. The proper understanding of log construction and its *evolution*, will rally the support now required in this housing *revolution*.

Programs like our Builder Certification are meant to further promote the high standards of our trade and assist the consumer in making an informed selection of those builders indeed dedicated to understanding and maintaining standards. These are not the minimum standards required by Building Codes, but standards and practices that are meant to sort the wheat from the chaff. Our members who do not subscribe to Certification are not cast, by assumption, into a collection of sub-standard builders, however, it is incumbent upon them to clearly define and defend their own building process. Neither is Certification a blanket assurance that those

members are a notch above the rest. Everyone is responsible for their own claims, however, Certification is a point of reference the public can gauge an understanding and approach to craftsmanship, as well as expectations of

particular business practices. This is where the log building industry has evolved and it is still just the beginning.

We no longer reside in a world where we can assume "log" builders are masters in their profession. Look at the ads and yellow pages ... everything from 10cm to 40 and 60cm are used as "logs" in a supermarket of notching and fastening systems for walls and roofs. Today's economy is very particular, and aggressive marketing by manufacturers often gives the illusion of building with "logs." As handcrafters, we are only scratching the surface of this market potential.

Without the promotion of standards, it is difficult to champion our cause. The ILBA is making efforts to reference its standards to both the NBC in Canada and the IBC in the States. Despite our efforts to promote this, there remains a (majority?) of builders who oppose the advent of any standards. Is the ILBA only a minority of representation of builders? Perhaps, but we are part of a strong and growing movement, based on a thorough understanding of where we came from.

We know our evolution. Now we must champion the Revolution. Alternative, Green, Renewable, and Responsible building practices all herald the well-built, handcrafted log home as a flagship of efficient and sound construction. Let's hope our homes still maintain their legacy thousands of years from now, hopefully in a world that has recognized the virtue of keeping our forests and building with logs. It's up to us to keep it alive!

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Rendez-vous

—Continued from page 1—

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Del Radomske's session on how to use scribed wedges in all openings to support the overscribe gap and to slow compression will close the gap in your approach to joining logs and shrink your hesitation to this approach.

Beyond the Saddle Notch

Egils Artmanis and Ed Shure will lead us through selecting and sharpening your edge tools, and developing layout and cutting sequences during a full-day session on the preparation and execution of their notch and the long scarfing of log beams. More so, they will scribe us an approach that leads to understanding joinery with a better appreciation of acquired skills and a respect for the wood we work. No need to bring tools.

Raw Goods

Les Jozsa joins us with a presentation on the form and structure of logs—log quality issues which are important to log home builders. Les recently presented at our conference in Park City and members have requested he return and be given a longer presentation time, as he was so interesting as well as entertaining. He will also bring along an array of his carvings, which he completes in his spare time.

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How are you shopping for your company's insurance needs? Will your coverage be there when you need it? Are you properly insured? Come and talk to the expert who has been researching the handcrafted industry in detail and can answer your questions.

Web site Stuff ...

Do you have Web site questions? Are you confused? You need to talk to the company assisting the ILBA. They'll be on site and there to show you some tips and provide a few ideas to assist you.

And there is more being planned. Watch the ILBA Web site for updates and register early as space is limited. Registration materials are being mailed to all members.

NOMINEES SOUGHT

Nominees for ILBA director positions are now being accepted. Election ballots will be mailed out in December.

Contact the ILBA office ASAP if you are interested or know of another member who is.

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Update

FROM THE ILBA OFFICE

Well, first off, we'd like to welcome Bettyann Moore, our new *Log Building News* editor. We've been having a fun month working together and trying new ideas. We're excited to announce you will now receive a new *Log Building News* every other month ... that's right, double the issues!

It's been a busy summer at the ILBA headquarters. Just as we finished up the details of our Utah conference, we began preparation for our 1st Annual Fall Rendez-vous. This event will happen in October at Cherryville, BC, and is shaping up to be a great get-together. We've even been in touch with Mary Mackie, who will join us as keynote

speaker. Mary helped co-found the ILBA back in the '70s, and having her attend is a real privilege.

Recently we sent out the new membership directory along with our membership survey. Response to the surveys has been great so far, and those individuals who have responded can anticipate receiving their ILBA pewter pin this month.

Our office building has taken on a new exterior look, thanks to the donation of log siding from our new member Rouck's Sawmill. The last of the stain is now on thanks to



Robert Savignac



Cathy Hansen



Ann Miks

Some new projects to announce, including a photo competition. See details on page 10 of this edition of the *LBN* and submit your entries for the October Rendez-vous judging.

Ann and Cathy also have decided to take advantage of all the great cooks we have in our membership and have taken on the task of creating Volume I of the *Log Builders' Cook Book*. Submit your recipes to the office ASAP, and see your name published in our first edition!

Deadline for submissions is Sept. 15, 2002—please send your favourite recipes to the office by email or fax.

We look forward to seeing many of you in October at the Rendez-vous. It's a great opportunity to come out and get a taste of what the ILBA can offer you! Where else can you network with so many industry professionals from all over the world? See you there!



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Membership Committee

We still need to finalize a budget and need your help with the budget items for that



Jeff Patterson

report. We have talked about some new classifications for membership including those for homeowners and building officials. If anyone has any other ideas, they

would be greatly appreciated.

We have also discussed the fee structure for members and are in the process of reviewing all of the member services. New or additional member services need to be discussed as

well.

I am looking for members to become involved on the Membership Committee and would appreciate anyone interested to contact me directly at jeff@edgewoodlog.com or home at 208-683-1712 in the evenings.

Research & Development Committee

The R&D committee prepared a "wish list" of topics that the ILBA would like to address in the future to enhance the growth of the log building industry and also to put the ILBA Log Building Standards to a test.

The ILBA office has been in contact with NRCan which is interested

in participating in research projects relating to thermal properties of log homes. NRCan also is prepared to carry some of the costs involved.



Ed Burke

We have been in contact with IRAP (Industry Research and Assistance Program) which provides funding to the industry for specific research projects.

The meeting held in Lumby was very positive and encouraged the ILBA to develop a proposal for scientific research and submit it to IRAP for review. The R&D committee will be working on the proposal and will keep you up to date on the progress.

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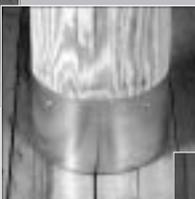
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