

TIMBER FRAMERS NEWS

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R. Ball

View of Habitat house sites, taken during staking for the foundations. "This is the first time I've laid out a building from a curb," Tedd Benson said later. The lots are in an area rapidly converting from rural to residential.

Habitat Frames Readied for Raising

HABITAT work continues to move steadily toward the spectacle of the simultaneous raising of two donated house frames on adjacent building lots in Hanover, Pennsylvania, not far from this year's conference site at Millersville. The finished timbers were to be ready the first of this month and have begun to flow toward Pennsylvania. Preparation of the foundations and first-floor decks to Guild specifications is underway now by local Habitat volunteers supervised by experienced builder Charlie Test. The panel companies, who have been known to fight like lions over the relative merits (or demerits) of their competing products, have agreed to lie down like lambs in order to get a worthy job done.

Tedd Benson, who brought this project to the Guild in the first place and who has been managing it with noticeable enthusiasm ever since, has united the talents of an architect in Minneapolis with the aims of a communal housing group in Pennsylvania, the decisions of frame designers in New Hampshire and the good will and skill of timber framers all over the country. This is no small feat. To make production a practical matter, a team system divides the work into manageable units. Reflecting the two frames (called Cramden and Norton), there are two divisions, each with its own frame boss, draftsman and six team captains. Paul Martin heads up work on the oak-and-pine frame with common rafters, with Ed Levin as draftsman, while Ben Brungraber bosses the oak-and-fir frame with common purlins, drawn up by Joel McCarty. Each of the team captains has charge of one subassembly in a frame and is responsi-

ble for seeing to all the pieces involved, from drawing to raising. Of these captains, Scott Hamilton and Dave Post have the largest assemblies—the respective roof systems—while Mack Magee, Jack Sobon, Al Anderson, Charles Landau, Kas Jaunzemis and Terry Turney each supervises a bent. Rudy Christian, Scott Murray, Ryan Revel and Mark Witter are each responsible for a floor bay.

Tedd has been overseeing all of this in the company of Ben Brungraber as consulting engineer and Ed Levin as principal frame designer, and will be relying on Ridge Shinn as trucking czar to accomplish the all-important task of ensuring that 300-odd timbers from almost as many sources arrive on site, on time. Ridge Shinn's map of the United States has been described as a thoroughly original document and will be preserved in the Guild archives.

PUBLICITY, which has fallen to the Guild to arrange, has been pursued vigorously by several Board members, chaired informally by Jeff Arvin, who developed press releases to newspapers and networks for general coverage, and press kits sent to each of the volunteer joiners for use in his or her own community, for promotion of the Guild, the project and the craft of timber framing. While the Guild's Board of Directors originally felt the Habitat frames should be made and conveyed in the spirit of a gift pure and simple, and that the Habitat organization would naturally create enough publicity to shine brightly on the Guild, time has proved otherwise, and the Board came to see the project as an extraordinary opportunity to educate the public and to promote the interests of the membership in a truly collective way.

A lively media event is thus the general expectation for Hanover on May 18. A producer for the BBC is preparing a one-hour feature for British television, with the raising, of course, as the center of attention, which Ed Levin hopes will show the whole story of a timber frame from start to finish. The production will be made in cooperation with the PBS affiliate in Philadelphia, which raises at least the possibility of an American broadcast one day.

—KEN ROWER

Conference Preparations Complete

THE RUN up to the Guild's fifth national conference May 18-21 at Millersville, Pennsylvania, pleasantly complicated this year by the Habitat project, is well-advanced now under the calm guidance of Conference Director Julie Benson. The lengthy schedule has been organized around the Habitat frame raisings and nearly a score of workshops and seminars arranged by a speakers committee led by the tireless Ed Levin, and the featured speaker has been chosen for Sunday morning's send-off session at the close of the conference.

Charles Wing, founder of the Shelter Institute and Cornerstones building schools in Maine, will speak on tools for the timber framer. "Most framers would think that meant a 2-in. chisel," says Charles, who trained and taught as a physicist before turning his attention to building construction. "But what I'm going to talk about is information. Trying to meld the best of the old with the best of the new is what timber framing is supposed to be all about. I'm sure about the best of the old getting in there but not at all sure about the best of the new."

A noteworthy seminar has been added to the schedule since the mailing of conference registration information. Brock Evans, a vice-president of the National Audubon Society and a prominent figure in the public environmental debate, will discuss forest resource questions, reflecting continued Guild concern with the future availability of old-growth and other good-quality, large-dimension timber. The talk will be entitled "The Politics of Ancient Forest Conservation."

While actual registration returns arrive bunched and fairly late, it was evident early this year that public interest in the Guild conference is at an unusually high level. Sharon Bosies at the Guild office has received many requests from non-members for forms and information, and thus attendance from outside Guild ranks is expected to be noticeable.

Activities for family members not primarily attending for the timber framing presentations have been expanded, with a local barn tour, a talk on Amish life and a spouses forum added to the child care that proved helpful last year.

The trade fair has found an ideal site this time—on the only route to the dining hall—and about 15 exhibitors of tools and materials of the trade are expected to appear, including one presenting a live conversion of logs to timbers.

THERE ARE five seats to be filled on the Guild's Board of Directors, and the field of nine candidates, including the five incumbents, is going to present the voting membership with an embarrassment of riches. Under the rules followed this year by the Nominating Committee, no further nominations will be taken at the conference. Ballotting will take place from Noon to 1:30 on Saturday, May 20, at the entrance to the dining hall. Candidates will be introduced at the business meeting on Friday, and the results of the election announced Sunday morning. Personal histories and credos of the nine candidates appear on pages 8-10.

—NORMAN DEPLUME