

Local Builders Like Post & Beam

By Nelson Lebo
Proctor Environmental Program

I worked this summer on two dozen timbers lying in my back yard waiting to become a barn. The majority were salvaged two years ago from a house torn down on Old College Road, but there are also three beams I cut, limbed, and hewed by hand.

Getting all my information about timberframing from a book just was not fulfilling. So I hit the road to meet some Andover residents with experience at post and beam construction.

Bob Hurlburt

The first I met was Bob Hurlburt, who lives on Main Street just west of Andover Village. You may have noticed the barn he has been building over the last couple of years. I've been eager to get a closer look and this was my chance.

Although Bob has been building professionally for just four years, he has a lifetime of experience on which to draw. That experience is reflected in the attractive design and tight joints of the barn.

Originally planned as a much larger building, Bob found that working only on weekends stretched the project too long. From cutting and milling the lumber himself to driving the last peg, he saw the process through from stump to cupola.

"I just like the look of timberframes," he answered in response to my question on why use this construction technique. "Although I'd only use timberframe for cold buildings."

He went on to tell me that he's worked on a lot of old post and beam houses and has always been impressed with their strength and stamina, but lamented the fact that we no longer get those beautiful large logs with tight rings and hardly a knot.

Eric Johnson

Perhaps he could strike a long-term deal with timberframer turned forest manager Eric Johnson. Eric's career shift came after three years of working with experienced joiner Steve Manning. Eric and his wife Heide initially hired Steve to build their home on Tucker Mountain Road. Eric left a teaching job to work alongside Steve on that project and caught the bug.

"It's the appeal of exposed framing. You see the way a house is put together." When asked why he and Heide chose post and beam construction, Eric explained, "We wanted an open-concept downstairs. You can get that with timber frame." He went on to add, "The exposed wood is phenomenal."

Toby Locke

This attraction to beauty and craftsmanship is common among timberframers, including Andover's only full-time joiner, Toby Locke. Toby began his work on frames a few evenings a week while working days with builder Donald "Duke" Evans. As one evening a week turned into three, Toby admits his day job suffered.

Recognizing this newfound passion for an old time technique, Duke told Toby to go for it. That was 1985 and Toby has not looked back since.

The style fits Toby's work ethic, creativity, and attention to detail. "I've always wanted to be an artist," he told me. Many who have seen his frames would say he is one. "My frames are almost like kids. While I'm building it's my house, and when I go back to see a frame I'm so proud. I get a rush when I walk in the door."

An admitted perfectionist, Toby claims the reason he's never made a lot of money timberframing is that, "I'd rather have the work look good than the worksheet look good." His belief in quality and his creative energy have gained him a fine reputation of which he is rightly proud.

Although Toby has a number of projects underway at the moment, he is particularly excited about a "frame inside a frame" job in a Gilford restaurant. He told me the owner has given him a certain level of artistic license to include woodcarving in the job.

Andy Prokosch

So here's a quiz: Are the terms "timberframe" and "post and beam" interchangeable? Andy Prokosch will tell you they are not. So when is post and beam not timberframe? Andy will tell you when it's a Shelter-Kit.

Following a family building project in the late 1960's, Andy started Shel-



Bill Leber (standing, center) presents commendations to Marianne Fairall (l) and Tim Norris (r) at the AOC Rib Eye Dinner. Photo by Ben Severance

Outing Club Starts Season With Rib Eye Feast

By Peter Southworth
Andover Outing Club

The Andover Outing Club (AOC) Dinner, held Saturday, November 20 at the Proctor dining hall, was a huge success due to the work of parents and young skiers.

Nearly one hundred people showed their support for the AOC and enjoyed a meal of boneless rib eye beef and make-

your-own sundaes.

Door prizes, a silent auction, and a commemoration of AOC coach Tim Norris and AOC organizer Marianne Fairall highlighted the night to benefit Andover's young cross-country skiers and jumpers.

The AOC thanks contributing local businesses and Proctor Academy for support of the dinner.

ter-Kit Incorporated in 1970. I drove to Tilton to visit Andy in the old brick mill along the Merrimack River where he has been designing and pre-cutting structures for nearly a quarter century.

"Our basic premise is to design a structure that can be assembled by two amateurs," says Andy. He went on to explain that the use of power tools and lifting equipment are unnecessary. His brochure states, "No more than two people of average strength are needed to carry any bundle of materials or lift any piece of lumber."

Using a scale model of the popular Barn-House design, Andy pointed out how dimensional lumber can be combined to carry the weight of the building similar to post and beam. This eliminates

the need for heavy timbers and carefully crafted mortise and tenon joints.

Posts consist of southern yellow pine 6x6s with 2x6 spruce "ledgers" nailed to two or three sides. The "beams," or headers in this case, are 2x10 southern yellow pine for the first floor and "double 2x12 with 2x10 top plate spruce."

As his Web site points out, Andy's designs "all use post and beam framing systems that encourage a wide variety of owner-inspired floorplans and permit almost unlimited door and window placement."

While a purist may argue with Andy's claim to post and beam, I found his system fascinating.

For more information about Shelter-Kit visit www.ShelterKit.com.

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too much. George's comment: "To me, this came out very, very well. I was pleased to see this."

But as Bob Ward pointed out, the mineral layers won't regenerate that well. "These are highly erodible soils. It looks nice now, but you wonder what it will look like in the springtime. Everything's going to get the water test soon," said Bob.

Changes To The Forest

As far as the forest itself goes, the best news is that F&R implemented a better plan than their original diameter-limit cut, which would have taken everything above a certain diameter.

But according to George, the plan they implemented certainly wasn't the best plan for the forest. "We don't have a diameter-limit cut here," said George, "but we do have something that's very close to what I would call a 'value-max-

imized' cut. Their intent was to get as much money as they could, within the context of the approved plan. And I think that's happened."

The cut took much of the best timber and left standing much of the less-valuable timber. Managing the forest for its long-term health and productivity would have removed more of the less-healthy and less-valuable stems, making room for more high-value stems.

George told us, "To me, you always start with [cutting] the worst stuff to provide room for something that's got more potential. I will say that they did leave some of it. When they got to the west side of the brook there's a lot more oak in the 14" to 16" diameter class left, which I was really pleased with."

The forest certainly benefits from the fact that there was very little whole-tree harvesting. Throughout most of the operation, the delimeter stripped the limbs

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