A breath of Poland

TAK TAK TAK is an often heard phrase around here, in Sanok, Poland, that simply means yes yes yes. It is also the sound an axe makes when heartily biting a log. The size of the log pile was truly daunting, the amount of work incomprehensible.

We worked at it for a week and then the HandsHouse crew began showing up. As we worked they fell in next to us, sometimes three or more on a 36-ft. log; sometimes they put us out of work entirely. Blisters formed and popped, hands were taped, calluses grew. Character was built. We all learned to say tak tak tak.

As the process of laying out and cutting joinery began, we worked to our truest understanding of traditional Carpathian standards, using a straight edge, pencil, and hatchet as best we could, with good result. To this task the students were equally able and willing. But really

2011 Eastern Conference in November

THE 2011 EASTERN CONFERENCE, in Leesburg, Virginia, Nov. 3–6, reflects burgeoning TFG and national initiatives. Practicing what we preach, we've chosen a venue—the National Conference Center (NCC) www.conferencecenter.com—that is the largest certified eco-friendly conference center in the nation. It’s on 110 rolling acres overlooking the Potomac River, a pleasant destination in November.

Pre-conference
The program for the Leesburg conference is coming together nicely. Leading off the pre-conference sessions will be an exciting two-day scribe rule workshop led by Will Truax. In support of the apprentice program—a growing TFG initiative if there ever was one—apprentices, journeyworkers, and other timber framers will find numerous offerings for their continuing professional education. Pre-conference workshops approved and underwritten by the Apprentice Training Committee will include raising and rigging, timber grading, project management, trade sciences, historic timber framing—conservation techniques, and a hands-on SIPSchool workshop. These intensive workshops will involve assessments and carry credits toward Apprentice certification.

See Eastern Conference, page 6
Clockwise, from above: An intact foot in a badly damaged boot demonstrates why we wear steel-toed shoes; Phil Kneisley on Millers Falls boring machine; Jacob Bach Jensen, a proud hip author; Rick and Laura Brown from HandsHouse, mainstays of the project, presenting ceremonial hornbeam, locust, and oak pegs while Bob Smith (left) and Mikkel Johansen (right, holding the umbrella) look on; Andy Kellerman pegging a girt; Marian Zub and Robert Supel with Marian’s bimah panel carving; Arek Kryda, Skansen architect and prime friend of the project in Sanok (see the Solstice blog post) profiling a timber; our brain trust: from left, Ed Levin, Mark Olson, Adam Zgola, and Jacob Bach Jensen studying synagogue drawings.

it was hard to make them stop hewing. The process of turning logs into timbers with an axe became addictive. By the end of the project I felt like I didn’t know what to do with myself, burning maybe a tenth of the calories I had been just days ago. Now a quiet tourist, but moments ago a small part of a big, rapidly beating heart.

I felt the significance of this project on a daily basis. I saw young people from Warsaw connecting with their own erased national heritage and students from the States connecting with their own abilities. All of us re-learning our hands and minds in new ways. It was so good to work with everyone involved.

The list of those to thank is long; you know who you are. It’s every one of you.

—Jackson DuBois
Be sure to visit our sumptuous Poland blog. A link is available at www.tfguild.org.
Welcome to the Guild!

WE EXTEND a warm greeting to these folks who joined the Timber Framers Guild in June. —Susan Norlander

Peter Barich, Portland, Ore.
George Busnach, Wilder, Vt.
William Conklin, Sheffield, Mass.
Joshua Farrand, Portland, Ore.
Tommy Fischer, Hals, Jutland, Denmark
Darin and Kathy Hassan, Findlay, Ohio
Derek D. Henderson, Golden, Colo.

Anthony Isgro, Santa Monica, Calif.
Zadoc Jastram, Rehoboth, Mass.
Cheryl May, Birmingham, Ala.,
Hugh McPeck, Anchorage, Alaska
Thomas Payne, Brookline, Mass.
Justin Quinn, Alturas, Calif.
Dave Sullivan, Albany, Ore.
Francis Zmigrodski, Vassalboro, Maine

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Northeast regional TFG meeting soon

PLANS ARE shaping up well for the September 23–25 TFG regional gathering at the Garland Mill in Lancaster, N.H. The timber scribing workshop that Glenn Dodge will lead looks to be an inspiring challenge—plenty to learn, lay out, and notch in the shadow of the White Mountains where the completed trail shelter frame will be raised. Just as engaging, Jan Lewandowski and Janet Kane will take folks on a historical timber frame investigation of a 50 x 100-ft. barn built over a century ago with timbers sawed at the water-powered Garland Mill. Working tours of the mill, a log-rolling competition, and great local food and refreshment will round out the weekend. Come join us!

Event costs and Saturday’s three meals are covered by a fee of $55 per person. There is some space for tent camping available at the mill, and a list of local lodging (B&Bs, campgrounds, etc.) is available through the Guild. To register, please reach the TFG office.

—Dana Southworth

Erratum

IN SCANTLINGS 163 (July), new member Troy Smiley was listed as living in Talkeetna, Arkansas. In fact, Talkeetna is in Alaska. We regret the error.
Eastern Conference, from page 1

The Timber Frame Engineering Council pre-conference symposium will offer sessions titled wood preservation, AWC/NDS2012, ASCE/SEI 7, wedged dovetails, sustainability, SIP–building design coordination, CLT, and natural building.

The Timber Frame Business Council will offer cost estimating and calculation for timber framers and how to lead a strategic planning session and why you should.

Overall, these workshops will be an invaluable opportunity to add and hone skills. To secure a spot in these workshops, plan ahead! Sign up right away at www.tfguild.org.

Main conference: some changes

Main conference sessions will be fewer than in the past due to the revisions in the schedule (see last paragraph) and will include Business Track topics like commercial timber framing, a social networking panel discussion, a business roundtable on the economy, and what company owners are doing. We will hear another veteran voice (our ongoing series of presentations from seasoned timber framing business professionals), and talks on structural insulated panels, design, engineering, and fall prevention and protection.

Another change in this conference will be a focus on demonstrations. There will be several, including a working comparison of plumb line and laser aided scribing, restoration and historic techniques, inspection and fitting of fall prevention harnesses and gear, and work positioning techniques. The ubiquitous Fire Tower Engineered Timber crew will be back with more electrifying joint busting, this time with a timber grader commenting on the failures.

There will even be a Tool Swap. We expect to host a few antique tool dealers and will invite members to bring up to ten tools to swap or sell to others.

Rounding out the conference will be many of the usual favorites like the Children’s Workshop, Axe Throwing, the Summer Beam Book Store, the Slide Show, the Auction, and the Trade Fair with its always-popular Trade Fair Mixer on Friday afternoon.

In summary: TWO full days of various pre-con events, a full week of intensive scribe instruction, and the main conference starting later than normal to save those of you not involved in pre-cons a night’s lodging and give you another full day at work. Main conference begins Friday at lunch, with the Member Meeting moved to Saturday morning.

—David Blackwell and Joel C. McCarty

Conference venue

The National Conference Center (NCC), www.conferencecenter.com, is the largest certified eco-friendly conference center in the nation. NCC is 12 miles from Dulles International and 35 miles from Reagan National Airport. Shuttle service to/from Dulles is available through NCC at $10 one way.

Lodging is based on single-couple occupancy with complimentary high-speed internet access available throughout the conference center. There is also free onsite parking and a 24-hour fitness center available to all conference registrants. The Black Olive Pizza & Sports Bar at NCC is open 5 pm–midnight (noon to midnight on Saturday and Sunday), with wide-screen TVs for watching the weekend’s favorite football game, arcade games, pool table, and darts. There is the Hop & Vine wine and beer bar as well as a Wii Lounge where you can challenge other timber framers to your favorite Wii game.

The folks at NCC are going out of their way to make sure the timber framers enjoy their conference. It is a convenient location for most of the eastern Guild members and convenient to expressways, airports, trains, and buses. There is just no excuse!! We are hoping to see you all in November.

—Brenda Baker
Conference preview

Pre-conference workshops
Plumb Line Scribe Rule / Will Truax
Apprenticeship
Raising and Rigging / Al Anderson, Grigg Mullen
Timber Grading / Bruce Lindsay
Project Management / Randy Churchill
Trade Sciences / Will Beemer
Historic Timber Framing–Conservation Techniques / Rick Collins
SIPSchool Workshop

TFEC (pre-conf.)
Wood Preservation, part 2 / Mack Magee
AWC/NDS2012 / Brad Douglas
ASCE/SEI 7 / Jim Rossberg
Wedge Dovetails / Lance Shields
SIP–Building Design Coordination / Paul Malko, Jeremy Bonon
Sustainable Design with Timber Framing / Jim DeStefano

Investigation of Through-Tenon Keys on the Tensile Strength of Mortise and Tenon Joints / Lance Shields
Cross-Laminated Timber (CLT) Research / Paul Thorley, Johnn Judd

TFBC (pre-conf.)
Cost Estimating and Calculating for Timber Framers / Juergen Poepsel
How to Lead a Strategic Planning Session and Why You Should

Main Conference
Commercial Timber Framing / Jonathan Orpin
Social Networking (Panel) / Laurie Sloan, Amy Good, Jennifer Young, Scott Rouleau
Business Roundtable / Bruce Bode, moderator
Veteran Voices
Cost-Effectiveness of SIPS
Design and Engineering topics
Demo: Fall prevention and Protection / Brian Phillips

Glenn Dodge is shown here describing to some focused students the principles of setting up the frame during a 2010 plumb line scribe rule workshop. This year’s two-day scribe rule workshop will be led by Will Truax.
Our appreciation
FOR 10 years now, the apprentices at Heartwood School have been privy to an opportunity unique to second-generation framers. We were led on a Timber-framing Tour de New England by our fearless captain and teacher, Will Beemer. The marathon roadtrip gave us a taste of the diversity of operations the timber framing world encompasses, from Hundeggers to hand tools. It helped us realize the familial history of the revival as a story of both passionate individuals and exuberant camaraderie, and included some tips on how we excited young folk can navigate our way.

We’re encouraged to pursue our personal dreams, to try and make it as our timber framing forefathers did. We’ve learned that our skills need to be versatile enough to function in a broader construction context. We loved the spirit of friendship and family that often came hand in hand with small and large operations alike, and we’ll try to live up to that legacy. We warmly thank those who’ve welcomed us to this community with their couch space, cookies, and chatoyant (Fr., cat’s eye: a term we learned for the grain relief that glows) anecdotal genius. In the spirit of perpetuating the craft, we cannot keep that wisdom for ourselves, so we are listing some of the best tips. Heard any of these before?

“This is my get rich slow plan.”
—Tom Southworth, on the purchase of his water powered mill.

“Perfect is close enough.”
—Will Beemer.

“You’ve just got to reek of confidence.”
—Jack Sobon, on getting people to pay you.

“This is how we gain new lifetime members for the Guild.”
—Joel McCarty, describing a feast prepared by Susan Norlander.

“Perfection and grace put a smile on your face.” You just gotta feel it!
—Steve Chappell

Thanks.
—Shannon McIntyre

Will Beemer adds: The graduates of the Heartwood program will be looking for timber framing work and official enrollment into Guild Apprenticeship in September. If you’re hiring, please reach me at will@tfguild.org or 413/623-6677.

Right, Heartwood apprentices at the TFG office in Alstead, N.H. We think they are trying to form the TFG logo. From left, Christian Pikaart, Shannon McIntyre, Annie Harris, Brandon Sullivan. Will Beemer on the right.
**Apprentice Log**

This marks the beginning of the second year of the apprentice program for our early adopters. Members of the Apprenticeship Training Committee are calling each Journeyworker and Apprentice who renew in May and June to see what we can learn, and improve, about the experience. We also would like to welcome two new Apprentices into the fold this month, Tim McGee under the direction of Matt Jenkins at Trillium Dell Timberworks in Illinois, and Jake Amadon under Adam Riley at Teton Timberframe in Idaho. Opportunities abound for program participants. Pay special attention to the Eastern Conference description on page 1.

—Joel C. McCarty

A Canadian Compagnon checks in

I finally made it into the Compagnon guild. I was recently “adopted” (the Compagnons’ term) at Dijon. With a four-week *mise en chantier* building project and accompanying rituals, it was a very interesting experience! Next comes the four-month reception (where we build THE masterpiece—a very ornate, complicated, complex, perfect, model).

Life in France, I find, is much faster-paced and more stressful than my life in Canada. I am the first and only
North American to have been adopted into the Compagnons (that we know of). Expectations are high. My team leader, Stéphane, is a Compagnon in the old style: very good at what he does and strict. It’s a love-hate relationship. He pushes me to improve by expecting only the best, on all fronts—how to talk to people, how to draw and read plans, raising the carpentry on the jobsite, knowing and using tools, understanding complex roof angles, and even appearance standards (clean shaven, properly dressed in “respectful” clothes with no holes in them). Sometimes it’s good but other times it’s very challenging. He has defined for me the image of a Compagnon.

I’m fully engaged now into their system, which means in addition to work I have studies 8–10 pm every weekend and 8–5 on Saturdays. Lots to do, but I’ve greatly improved my compound joinery skills. I’m learning a lot; the Compagnons have much to give.

Is anybody else interested in coming over through this exchange? If so, please get in touch with me. My email is blind_p@hotmail.com, and my number here is 06.76.39.19.58 (cell). If you want to call, please call before 4 pm New York time, because I’m six hours ahead.

I’ve had the opportunity to visit some great sites here in France and all over Europe. I recently returned from Germany, where I had the chance to visit some German Zimmermänner (and was given a Zimmerman outfit). The German approach is very different from that of the French Compagnons, but the base is the same. —Patrick Moore
TFG Board directors: elections approaching

A RECENT practice that has worked very well has been to have the new TFG directors—there are always three seats open each year—attend the Eastern conference as a combination orientation and opportunity for board meetings. It saves on travel and gets the new board off to a good start.

For that reason, scouting for candidates has happened through other means than Scantlings.

Though one or two of the board members whose terms will expire this year are considering running again, we are still scouting. Taking a seat on the Board of Directors is a great opportunity to dig deeper into the Guild (and into Guild events). If you are interested in putting your name in the hat, please get us a candidate statement and a photo by August 10. The full schedule is:

- Candidate bios due August 10
- Balloting opens September 10
- Ballots in, results announced October 10

If you’re thinking of running for a Board position, I encourage you to call me (559/834-8453) or any Board member (see page 2) to discuss. Thanks for thinking about it, and be sure to vote when the time comes.

—Joel C. McCarty

MEMBER NEWS

A new Baker.
Born to Peter Baker (son of Frank and Brenda Baker) and Michelle Baker: Phoebe Mae Baker, July 1, 8 lbs. 3 oz., 22 in. long. Born with an independent spirit following 44 hours of labor. Mother and baby are doing great.

Matching grant.
The TFG gratefully acknowledges a generous volunteer matching donation from BP on behalf of the work of Shirley Fedora and Bill Palmer on the restoration of the CCC pavilion in the Talledega National Forest Project in March, 2010.

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PLEASE CONSIDER the following a musing.

All of my company’s work revolves around building wood windows and doors, and occasionally a section of timber frame for a home. Most people ask for a renovation where they want the piece to look old, but aren’t willing or interested in having the piece built “old.” On the other hand, when a person sometimes asks to restore a piece, they want a genuine replacement—“identical” to what is being replaced in terms of material, detail, and technique. As a businessman, I never want to say I can’t do something; however, when it comes to restorations, I sometimes have to say no. It comes down to the forest we have left to work with in 2011.

In Nova Scotia, our first-growth forests were harvested (by Europeans) from around the mid to late sixteenth century through to the beginning of the nineteenth century. During this roughly 250-year span, the first-growth forest was cut. The cycle repeated itself with the growth and cut of the second-growth forest over the next 150 years. Today, we are cutting the last of the third-growth forest and are into the fourth-growth forest. While there are differences between second- through fourth-growth forests in terms of wood properties and quality, these differences are minor compared to the differences between second- through fourth-growth wood and first-growth wood.

I would be hard pressed to quantify these differences, hence the musing, but they exist. It could be the wood’s intrinsic strength, or its response to changing moisture and temperature conditions, but there is a difference. These differences become a deal breaker when the material properties of wood are a primary component of a building’s character-defining elements.

Our biggest problem with the ability to complete a restoration comes when we are asked to replace a timber in a building built between 1760 and 1820. This was a critical period in Nova Scotia history with the resettlement of the Acadians and the introduction of the Planters and Loyalists, not to mention the British move into Cape Breton.

When dealing with a building from this period, one of the character-defining elements is the building’s timber frame. There is a strong possibility that the frame was made from first-growth wood. In this instance, our only chance of restoring the structure is to find first-growth wood.

Given that we are trying to complete this work in 2011, and remembering this province’s forestry past, our only option is to find an existing piece of first-growth wood from another building; easy in theory but hair pulling and frustrating in practice. For all practical purposes, if finding another piece of first growth is my only option, I would say I couldn’t find the wood. This may be a cop out, but having had to deal with this scenario a couple of times, experience wins out.

Without the first-growth wood, a restoration is not possible. At best, the project is a renovation. Some may consider that in this case the lack of first-growth wood is not a deal breaker, or that that the distinction between restoration and renovation is academic. They are entitled to their opinion.

I’m suggesting restoration is an all or nothing venture. Either you have the material, details, and techniques, or you don’t. If you do, you can complete the restoration; if not, you are doing a renovation.

First-growth Nova Scotia wood is, for all practical purposes, extinct. As such, we have lost the ability to restore a part of our past. It is still possible to replicate the past through renovation, but it cannot be repeated through restoration. It also has an implication for heritage conservation work.

Restoration has a very specific meaning in conservation circles. I’ve taken the definition further by suggesting that without the triumvirate of material, detail, and technique, it is impossible to complete a restoration. In the case of certain Nova Scotia timber frames, it is impossible to complete a restoration because the appropriate material no longer exists. In this case, we have reached a fundamental limit in our ability to complete a task that at first look, appears possible to complete. This is a humbling reality.

—Austin Parsons
NOTICES

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Workshop frame . . . and at a great price! 12 x 16 ft., three-bent frame. Includes floor system. See the photo/drawing at www.rockymountainworkshops.com: click Mastering the Basics of Square Rule Timber Framing. References from previous workshop frame buyers are available. For details, reach Peter Haney, workshop organizer, Colorado, haneyrmw@frii.com, 970/482-1366.

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Carpenter.
I am looking for an old school craftsman. Do you sharpen your own hand tools? Do you hand-cut dovetails? Do you have any photos of your work? Tell Lambos Tsousidis, Canadian Salvaged Timber Corp. 525 Adelaide St. West, Unit 1, Toronto, ON M5V 1T6. Phone 415/265-8875. Email canadiansalvagedtimber@hotmail.com. Thank you.

Novice seeking work.
Experienced financial project manager and non-traditional student at South Dakota State University, graduating in December 2011, wants to develop framing and design skills. Senior project compares light-frame and heavy-frame construction costs and benefits. Long-term goal is to create a timber framing business in South Dakota. Willing to start at the very bottom to become a professional timber framer you will be proud of. Not afraid of hard work with modest compensation requirements. Currently located in Brookings, S.D., willing to move anywhere to gain experience. David Hubbard at david@hubbardgenesis.com, 605/951-0476. Résumé available online, references upon request. Thanks.
### Guild events

**Trillium Dell Timber Works/TFG**  
**Midwest rendezvous**  
Aug 3–6, Knoxville, Ill.  
r.collins@trilliumdell.com, 309/289-7921, 309/221-8020.

**Engineers Without Borders/TFG**  
**Intro to timber frame engineering**  
www.eng.uwyo.edu/societies/iec/.

**Northeast Regional Meeting**  
Sep 23–25, Garland Mill, Lancaster, N.H.  
(See page 5.)

**Southeast Regional Meeting**  
Oct 1, Mountain Rest, S.C.  

**Eastern Conf. 2011**  
Nov 3–6, Leesburg, Va.  
(See page 1.)

### Other events

**Carlon-Sobon**  
**Traditional timber framing** / Jack Sobon and Dave Carlon  
Sep 21–25, Hancock Shaker Village, Pittsfield, Mass.  
Jack Sobon, 413/684-3223, or Dave Carlon, davecarnon01@aol.com, 413/684-3612.

**EcoNest School of Natural Building**  
In Salt Spring Island, B.C.:  
**Clay-fiber walls** Aug 1–4  
**Natural plasters** Aug 5–6  
**Roof construction** Aug 8–11  
In Ashland, Oregon:  
**Natural plasters** Oct 7–9  
Robert Laporte, robert@econest.com, 541/488-9508.

**Heartwood School**  
**Cruck framing** Aug 1–5  
**Square rule timber framing** Aug 15–19  
**Scribe rule timber framing** Aug 22–26  
**Compound roof framing** Aug 29–Sep 2  
**Advanced SketchUp for complex timber roofs** Sep 6–7
Concrete countertops  Sep 8–9
Housed stringer stairbuilding / Billy Dillon  Oct 10–14
Energy-efficient housebuilding: current best practices  Oct 28–29
Washington, Mass.

Historic New England and Roger Williams University
Looking forward: preservation in New England in the 21st century  Oct 1, Bristol, R.I.
www.historicnewengland.org, 617/994-6642.

North House Folk School
Basic timber framing  Sep 7–11
Build your own timber frame (small frames)  Oct 1–9
Build your own hand plane  Sep 24–25
Build your own timber frame (large frames) call for schedule

Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Thaddeus Stevens College of Technology, & Preservation Trades Network

Rocky Mountain Workshops
Scribing compound roof systems in plumb line scribe / Glenn Dodge  Aug 22–27
Mastering the basics of square rule / Will Beemer and Skip Dewhirst  Sep 11–17
Colorado State U. Mountain Campus, Pingree Park.

Town of Golden, B.C.
Kicking Horse Bridge celebration  Oct 22, Golden, B.C. (See page 16.)

Trail Ridge Timber Frames
Comprehensive timber framing  Aug, Sep (tentative)

U.K. Carpenters Fellowship
Frame 2011  Sep 2–4, Nat'l Museum of Wales, near Cardiff.
Tim Walton, info@carpentersfellowship.co.uk.

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Paul Russell
Kicking Horse Bridge anniversary

TEN YEARS ago in October, the TFG raised a pedestrian bridge across the Kicking Horse River in Golden, B.C. It was quite a project! We extend an invitation to all participants to come back and see how the dream is growing. Our ceremony will take place October 22 in the Spirit Square (below right, where a stepped fountain provides a symbolic link to the river), with dinner and entertainment to follow at our newly renovated Civic Centre.

If you were a part of the bridge project and would like to take part, please email me at goldengirl@uniserve.com with your current contact information.

—Cathy Williams, Town of Golden