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Mark Your Calendar:

2018 GLLCA
Annual Conference
Cove Point Lodge
May 17-20
Beaver Bay, MN

**note the
CHANGE
IN DATE!**

also:
2018 ILBA
Annual Conference
April 6-8
Mino, ON

TFG
Regional gathering
April 27-29
Grand Marais, MN

Dynamics of D r y i n g W o o d

By Donovan Dums

Anyone who burns wood for heat knows that burning dry wood is more efficient than burning wet wood.

Anyone that was at last year's conference saw the piles of fresh-cut white pine we had at our log yard. Over the course of the summer we used those logs, (average of 14" tip) and built a structure. Last fall and this winter we put the roof on, and are now on the home stretch for finishing this spring.

During the log-construction phase, we did kerf the logs to the ILBA Log Building Standards and this past February we cut out the windows. I took some the cut-outs home and watched them dry by the fire.

There are many variables effect change to a log in a log home and a full log inside a structure will act much differently than a 3" cut-off; the knots will effect checking, the spiral will effect checking, the pressure of the log structure will play a part. Drying two slices by the fire might not be an accurate representation of what will happen to full round logs in a structure, but I do think it is interesting to see what happened in this case.

I have attached images to show how the pine slices dried. The first image shows the two logs the night I brought them in from outside. Two weeks later I took the second image. The kerf was cut at approximately 3/8" and both logs opened up to 1 5/8".



Green Wood



Dry Wood



Woodchuck

by Hank Petit

Last fall as I was cleaning up one of my few remaining log piles I found a woodchuck carcass on the ground between the logs. It was just a few bits of fur, a skeleton, and a skull. I started to think of the tongue twister – How much wood could a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood. It was like that song ditty that would not go away. A few days later after I got the logs cleaned up I had the skidsteer there to level up the area and there he was again. Now I know that it is a ground hog but I started to think the woodchuck ditty again.

The woodchuck ditty came up again this winter so I decided to “google it” to find out how much wood a woodchuck can chuck. Low and behold there are some answers there; it is the internet so it must be so. A biologist calculated the area of dirt removed from the woodchuck burrow converted to pounds of wood would be 700lbs of wood a woodchuck could chuck!

I found some algebraic equations that I was particularly fond of in math and physics class that helped me get a handle on the wood chucking question as well. Since we all chuck some wood these may help.

A woodchuck would chuck as much wood as a woodchuck would chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood.

MEH

$$\frac{\text{wood}}{\text{would}} + (\text{woodchuck} + \text{woodchuck})\text{chuck} + \frac{\text{woodchuck}}{\text{could} - \text{chuck}} = \text{wood}$$

But if a wood chucks woodchucks, woodchucks chucked by wood wouldn't chuck, and being chucked, woodchucks would chuck negative wood.

$$\frac{\text{wood} + \text{chuck}}{\text{woodchuck}} = -\text{wood}$$

The conclusion: We are dealing with imaginary wood.

$$\frac{\text{wood} + \text{chuck}}{\text{woodchuck}} = I^2 \text{wood}$$

It was Woodchuck's Day just a few days after writing this article. Another 6 weeks of winter here! Sorry, is retirement really this bad? Humor Me! This is my story and I'm sticking to it.

Great Lakes Log Crafters Association

John Schroeder - President

Duane Sellman- Treasurer

Nathan Heim- Director

Hank Petit- Director

Frank Vanderveur- Director

Mark Webber- Director

Peter Williams- Director

Donovan Dums- Past President

Ron Heim, Jerry Koski- Trustees

Kay Sellman- Business Manager

Great Lakes Log Crafters Association

24355 Esquire Blvd.

Forest Lake, MN 55025

website: www.gllca.org

email: info@gllca.org phone: 612-590-7133

The GLLCA is an organization of professional log builders and others interested in the art of handcrafting log structures. GLLCA exists for “PROMOTING EXCELLENCE IN THE HANDCRAFTED TRADITION.”

SPARTANBURG HERALD, SPARTANBURG, S.C., TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1981—Page B1

For Ernie Witta, Log Cabin Construction Is An Art

By JIM HOLLAND JR.
Staff Writer

GAFFNEY — Ernie Witta is a contractor and uses a hammer in his work, just as any other builder does.

But Witta's hammer weighs about 40 pounds. Although he has been in the house-building business for 40 years, Witta has finished only 16 of the dwellings. He is building one in Cherokee County which he really rushed through. He began this project last May and will probably be finished in about another week.

Sometimes, Ernie Witta, a 71-year-old resident of Big Fork, Minn., takes three years or so to finish one of his houses. And if you hire him, be prepared to pay well for it.

You have probably guessed by now that the spry Witta, who looks at least 10 years younger than his age and who has a background like a fictional character, doesn't build conventional houses.

He builds log houses, starting with the tree and going until the job is finished. Witta built his first log home when he was 25 and has developed the craft to the point that many have considered it to be an art. His log houses cost about three times as much as comparable conventional houses sell for. A basic two-bedroom log house costs more than \$100,000 — and that's just for the roof, walls and windows. Most of them finished cost about twice that.

That 40-pound hammer is used to place the large logs. He uses wooden pins to tie them together.

Witta is building a 1,500 square-foot three-bedroom log house for Bill Price on S.C. 11 about two miles west of Gaffney. The house will have a full basement, two additional bedrooms and a work area for Price, who is not married.

Price's father, Bucky, a Cherokee County peach grower, met Witta last year when both of them were hunting in Montana. Bill had been looking at log cabin plans and his father said "they all began to look alike." He met Witta and learned of his profession and the arrangements were made.

Witta uses no established plans. The houses are built to the specifications of the owners.

Until about seven years ago, Witta worked alone, and he was longer in building a house. That's one reason that he has finished just 16. Now, he has a half-dozen helpers including his grandson.

Witta builds with white cedar logs from trees he finds in the swamps near the Canadian border. Some of the trees measure more than two feet in diameter. Witta says cedar is light, rot-resistant and easy to work with. He also likes the uneven surface with its knot formations and curves. This provides character for the walls. He chooses each log to match the one adjacent to it.

Witta acknowledges that only the well-to-do can afford his services. He is involved in a 40-by-80-foot mansion in Minnesota. The house, which Witta says will cost in excess of \$500,000, will have 6,800 square feet of living space plus a large covered veranda and carport.

Six tractor-trailer loads of cedar will be used in the wall construction. Another three loads of spruce are being used for roof beams. The covered area of the house will be 105 feet long. The area is so secluded where the home in Minnesota is being built, trucks could not move the material to the site. It had to be placed on a raft and pulled by boat.

Although Ernie has slowed down some, he has no plans to retire. He had back and



ERNIE WITTA is not your conventional contractor. Instead, the 71-year-old builder painstakingly constructs very costly log cabins with a 40-pound hammer of solid oak. (Herald-Journal photo by Greg Holland)

hand injuries in a fall about six weeks ago. He believes in the therapy of getting back to work.

Witta has a rugged background, being of

Finnish ancestry. He left home when he was a teenager and says he was a hobo for five years, although he always worked to support himself, but never more than a

month on any one job. He has fished for salmon in Alaska and trapped animals along the Canadian border.

Ernie Wita

by John Schroeder

I don't know how many remember Ernie Wita, but I have some distant memories of him coming into our shop in the 1990's to sit and shoot the breeze. I've got hazy memories of visiting his cedar log home with a bear skin rug on the floor. If you didn't know Ernie Witta, he was an old Finnish log builder who primarily used cedar and was instrumental in teaching my dad the craft.

I stumbled upon an old newspaper article from 1981 (reprinted above) that featured the master, so I thought it would be nice to share. Fairly recently we lost B. Allan Mackie. What other old masters are fathers of the log craft in the Great Lakes region? From whom did you learn the craft? Share with us so that we can pay tribute!

CLASSIFIEDS

Spar Log Peeler For Sale – Price Just Reduced

Works excellent for debarking green logs or finish peeling seasoned logs. Last chance to see operating as

It must be moved by fall 2017. \$15,000

Call 715-491-1687 or Check it out

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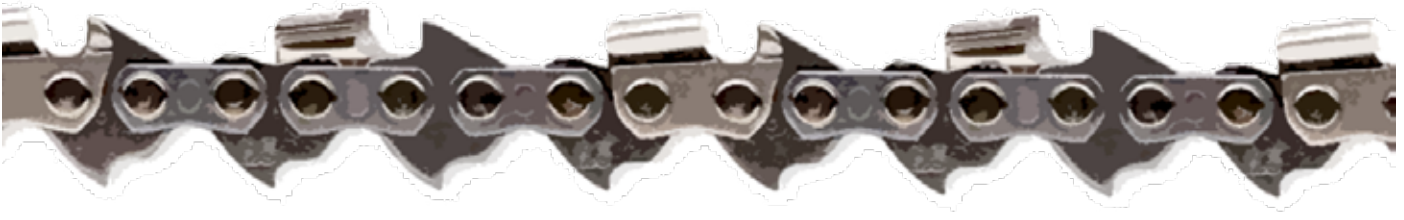
House Logs Available

Red & White Pine

30' to 60' Lengths w/ 12"+ tips

Peeling & Kiln Drying Available

Call Sam Williams (715) 630-4135 for details



What Size Chainsaws to Use for Log Building and/or Log Restoration

By Frank Vanderveur

When building log cabins or doing log restoration work, I use three or four different sizes of chainsaws. For building, I use the Stihl MS 362 –C-M Tronic for cutting the notches and laterals and use the Husqvarna 365 for cutting scarfs only with a 24" or 20" bar on it.

Why do I use one saw for just cutting scarfs? I found out that the bar and chain wears off on one side more than the other. So the straight cuts were disappearing when I needed to make a straight cut. Over time the cutting of the scarfs became easier because the bar was wearing down more.

In log restoration work, I use the Stihl MS 193-C to cut out all the decayed wood. It is a nice small and light saw which is easily maneuverable, especially in tight corners. It has a 30.1 cc displacement and 1.74 hp. I have a hardnose 14" bar with a .325 low profile Micro Picco chipper chain on it. This saw is equipped with a gear-driven oil pump. The Stihl 170 or the Stihl 180 are fine, too, but don't last as long I've found out. This was because the oiler was not working properly after a short period of time. It is maybe a good saw for the home owner but not for the work I am doing. The price for the MS 170 is \$180.00 and the MS 193-C is \$380.00

Then I have the old Stihl 064 with an engine displacement of 85 cc and 6.5 hp, which I use for logging or attach the Alaskan Sawmill to it. This is the power you need for this chainsaw attachment. The combination of the two is nice. I use a special ripping chain with a 32" bar. I use them to mill logs in half or cut half logs to the correct thickness. This unit is handy when you work in remote areas and there is not a saw mill available nearby. It takes some time to set up the guide rail, but it is always ready for you when you need it. And it gives you a perfect clean cut.

The Stihl MS 362-C-M Tronic with an engine displacement of 59 cc and 4.6 hp is a newer saw with a computer chip in the carb which tells the carb what mixture to use at what outside temperature. The saw has worked excellent for me so far. In the morning it takes less than 3 pulls and then during the day it only takes one pull to get it started. I use this saw for cutting laterals, notches and logs to size whether crosscut or ripping. The challenging part of this saw will be when you need to do troubleshooting. It has to be hooked up to the computer to get a diagnosis of the saw problems.

Of course the maintenance and cleaning of the chainsaws is more frequent in the log restoration work due to all the fine sawdust in the rotted logs. This fine dust seems to go everywhere in the saw and (if you don't wear a mask) in your lungs.

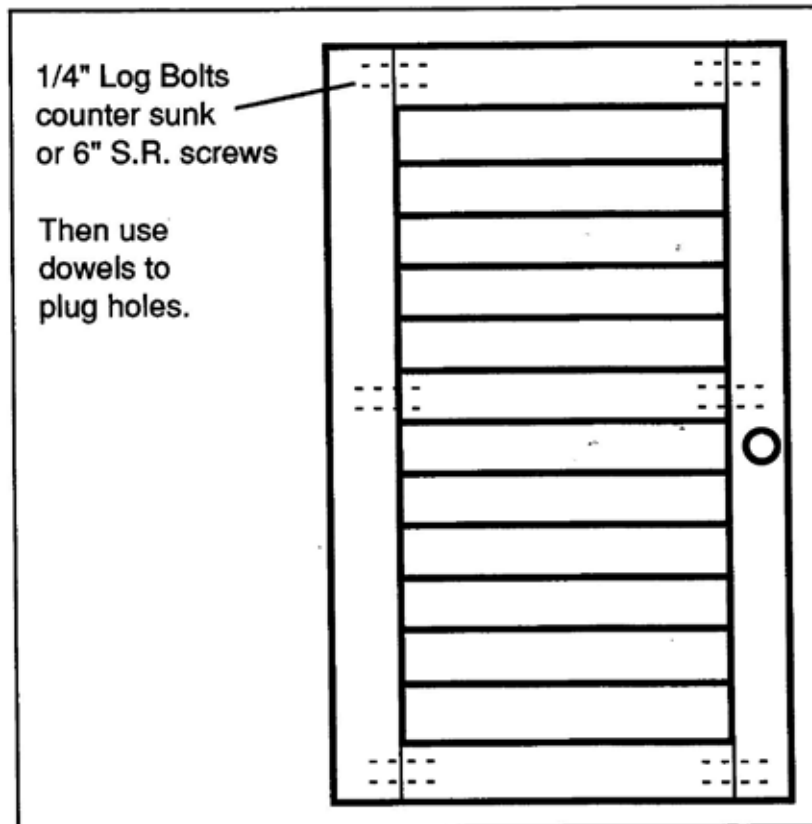
This is my experience with the brand of saws mentioned above. There are other brands of great saws, too, of course. You should choose a brand you feel comfortable with and where you get the best service.

MAKING FRAME & PANEL DOORS WITH A RADIAL ARM SAW

Mike Falls

Mike Falls Log Homes and Cottages

Make the frame of the door out of 2 x 10 or 2 x 12 stock ripped down so you do not have the center of the tree in your lumber. Set up a dado head in the table saw and



rip a 9/16 inch groove on the inside of the frame. You have to cut tongues, or use a half-lap joint on the center frame rail.

To make the panels, we use a double layer of 1 x 6 tongue & groove with tar paper in the center. That makes a double tongue and groove joint to help stop air infiltration. Cut the panel parts to length, then turn the head of your radial arm saw as if you were going to rip with it. You must use a heavy carbide multitooth blade for best results. Raise the saw head 1/4 inch above the table. Then put a stop block in front of the saw blade up against the fence,

and come in from the backside of the blade, against the fence with your 1 x 6. Then be nudging the 1 x 6 into the blade and moving the saw head back and forth on its arm, you can make perfect panels that would take a very large shaper cutter to make. Use a belt sander to clean them up after they are put together.

To make a different size radius, just use a different diameter blade. You can also make panels for cabinet doors. When assembling, do not glue panels for cabinet doors. When assembling, do not glue panels into the rail frame, glue only the frame together.

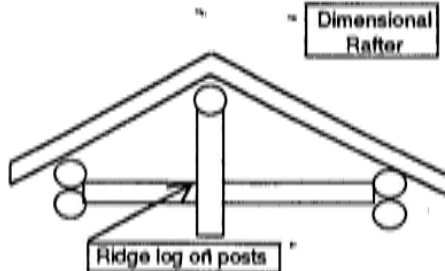
*reprinted from our 1991 fall newsletter.

FRAMING IN GABLE ENDS

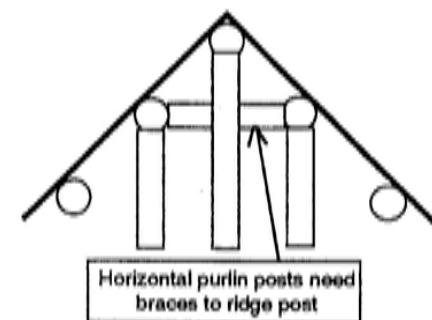
by Deane Hillbrand

There are a number of techniques that appeal to me lately to build tighter and easier gable ends on log buildings.

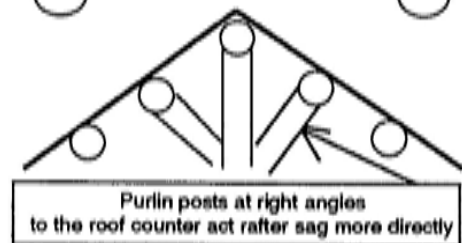
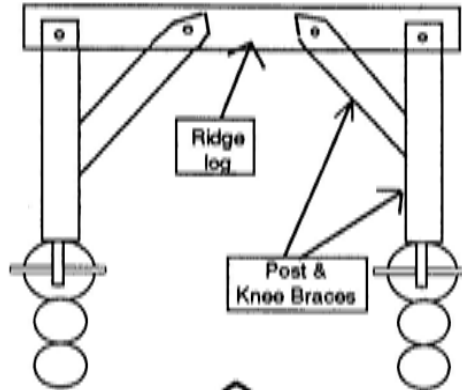
One is to eliminate truss work to have fewer openings to frame in. The simplest roof system is to have a ridge log set on posts which in turn support dimensional lumber rafters running from ridge to plate.



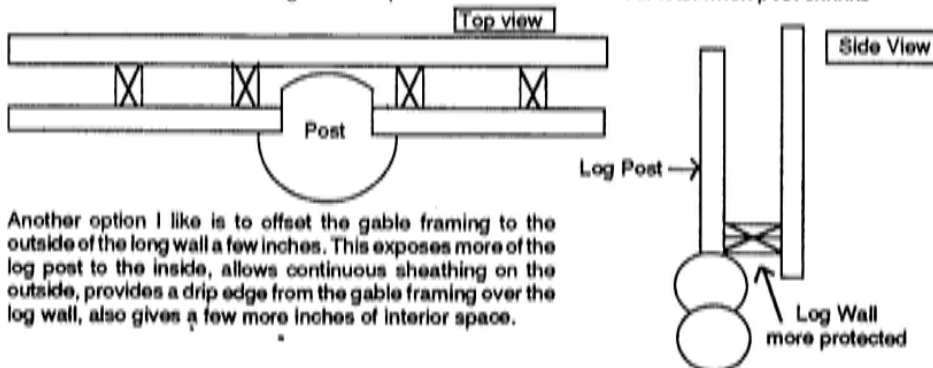
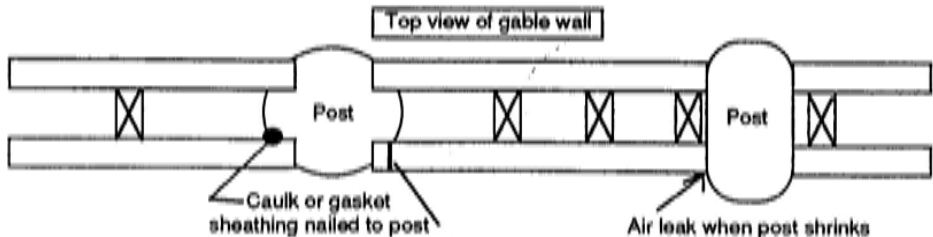
If the span from the ridge to plate requires intermediate purlins, they could be made in the same form as the ridge assembly. They could also be positioned with the purlin posts perpendicular to the roof plane and eliminate the need for members between posts.



For lateral bracing and roof hold-down, I mortise and tenon knee braces from ridge pole to posts; the ridge pole to post connection and the post to log work connection should also be mortise and tenoned and pegged.



For framing between log supports in gables I like to cut grooves in the posts so sheathing can be nailed directly on the post. This way the seam is easily caulked or gasketed and is unaffected by post shrinkage unlike post to wall junctions where the post is slabbd on 2 sides.



Another option I like is to offset the gable framing to the outside of the long wall a few inches. This exposes more of the log post to the inside, allows continuous sheathing on the outside, provides a drip edge from the gable framing over the log wall, also gives a few more inches of interior space.

*reprinted from our 1991 spring newsletter



President's Corner

By John Schroeder

The Joyce Estates: A '20's era lumber baron build a remote resort in Itasca County, Minnesota, and invited the rich and famous to come an play on Trout Lake. I'd heard about it periodically, and had never been to it, which is an inexcusable shame because it's pretty much just a jaunt through the woods from my family's log home. Well, the day to cancel regrets is *today*, so in February I hopped onto my skis to go check that adventure off the list. An historic log site sitting in the wilderness of my back yard... it was a curiosity that I hadn't visited it yet.

In a semi-primitive section of the Chippewa National Forest, the Joyce Estates are about a three-mile hike or ski in to reach. By boot, snowshoe, ski, or paddle, you can pick your unmotorized mode of entry (or by motorboat access come summertime). Much of the century-old compound has been claimed by time, leaving only foundations or indentations in the ground. There are still standing, however, the lodge, some cabins, and a bath house, all made of log. Unfortunately, vandals have seen it fit to visit the site and have left broken windows and other flares of destruction. The main lodge has stood soundly for decades in spite of vandals and weather, because it was built well with long overhangs and a wrap-around deck.

Asloping grade away from the building, a raised foundation, and long overhangs to keep sun and water off the logs... looking at a log structure as a metaphor, what are the design strengths and flaws of our organization and our industry? Will we survive decades through bad weather and vandals, or are there things we can do to strengthen our foundations, lengthen our eaves, and divert destructive waters away from us? For our industry, our businesses, our organization, what are the things we've done or can do to prevent decay? Logs have a rich history- let's be sure the future of log stands even stronger. Some food for thought and discussion at our next conference. So on that note...

See you at Cove Point Lodge in Beaver Bay, MN, **May 17-20!** (*NOTE: It was scheduled for April 26-29, but since there was overlap with the Timber Framers Guild regional gathering, we rescheduled.*) I will also be in Grand Marais for the TFG regional gathering, so I hope to see you there as well!



Angle Iron Spline Experience

By Duane Sellman

This month I finally replaced a 5' patio door with a 5' bay window. I found no indication of decay near the steel. This bay window has been in my basement for 2 years waiting to be installed. So it was time!!

In 1989, I installed this patio door when Kay and I built our log house in Forest Lake, Minnesota. I used 2"x3"x3/16" angle iron screwed to the back of 2x6 rough bucks. I never liked cutting grooves for 1" or 1-1/2" splines. It is hard on my muscles, the chainsaw, and requires a lot of time in potential "kickback" zone. A single sawkerf for the 3" leg of angle iron is so much easier! I have always heard any metal in a log wall attracts moisture from condensation and will cause decay in the wood. I have seen this next to big spikes in kit profile log homes. I find it curious enough condensation gets on these spikes to decay the wood when they are imbedded in wood. With the exception of the top of the spline, there is very little air in contact with the spike. As I recall, for condensation to occur, there needs to be warm moist air next to the cool steel.

Another possibility is the logs were green when spiked, but I doubt they were greener than my house logs as I prefer green wood. However, I am slow enough constructing a log house that by the time I put splines in, the logs have dried a fair amount.

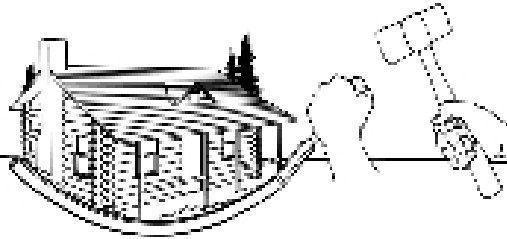
For that reason, the last 20 years I have been diligent about installing gaskets on either side of the angle iron but in 1989, I didn't do that. I poked fiberglass in all the gaps and evidently it slowed the air movement enough so there was no condensation because I found no decay, "dry rot" (yes, there was moisture there when "dry rot" occurred), or even rust on the angle iron. That is no more rust than when I installed the splines.

So no gaskets next to the splines. Actually, I should not admit this, but there was no plastic vapor barrier on the interior of the settle space above the door filled with fiberglass or wind barrier on the exterior. I used this exterior to show people the fiberglass filled settle space and rough bucks as I never found the time to install the cedar casing on the exterior. Maybe that let the "condensation" dry out before anything bad happened. I don't believe that is the case because I have about 4 other occasions when I removed "T" iron or angle iron splines that showed no rust or decayed wood.

In conclusion, I still like angle iron splines best. With modern day gaskets, there are options available to prevent air movement which could increase the chances of condensation causing decay.

Good scribing and building or good retiring. I'm having trouble retiring – darn people keep calling! But as I love what I do LIFE IS GREAT!

DUANE



The Great Lakes Log Crafters Association

CONFERENCE AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

JUNE 3RD, 2017

John Schroeder, GLLCA president, called the meeting to order at 11:18 a.m. on June 3rd, 2017.

John asked for a roll call. Kay recorded the following attendees:

Derek Brekke Bob Kenel
Chris Clay Hank Petit (Director)
Donovan Dums (Director) John Schroder (President)
Dan and Ruth Dums Duane (Treasurer) & Kay Sellman
Deb and Mike Hansen Frank Vanderveur (Director)
Nate Heim (Director) Mark Webber
Ron Heim

John asked for any changes to the Agenda.

- e. Bob asked to add discussion of Deb & Mike Hansen's proposal for GLLCA members to help with constructing a small log building at the Hayward Lumberjack World Championships in 2018.
- f. Donovan asked to add reimbursement for people who presented at this year's conference.
- g. Hank asked to add discussion of changing the Code of Ethics in the By-Laws.

John asked if there were any communications to the Board. Duane, as GLLCA treasurer, reported that the fundraiser auction held on Saturday night (June 2, 2017) brought in \$2,434.97.

John asked for approval of the June 4th, 2016 Annual General Meeting Minutes. Dan Dums made a motion to approve the minutes. Duane Seconded. Motion passed.

AGM Minutes continued on pg. 10

AGM Minutes continued from pg. 9

REPORTS

Duane reported that the Association's accounts had:

1. Main Checking Account Balance as of 05-21-2017 \$ 1,964.33
2. Petty Cash Checking Account Balance as of 05-21-2017 939.85
3. Savings Account Balance as of 05-21-2017 20,723.20
4. Certificate of Deposits 15,239.99

Dan Dums made a motion to accept the treasurer's report. Chris Clay seconded. Motion passed.

There was discussion regarding the "Waiver" that everyone signed when registering at the conference. Dan Dum suggested our Waiver be reviewed by an attorney.

Bob suggested that we call our insurance company to see if they have a standard waiver we could look at.

Dan Dums made a motion to have our "Waiver Clause" reviewed by an attorney. Ruth Dums seconded. Motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS

Election of Directors and Officers

Nominee for Treasurer was Duane Sellman. Ruth asked that the nominations be closed. Mark seconded. Duane will be the GLLCA Treasurer for a two year term.

Nominees for Directors were Mark Webber, Hank Petit, Dan Wait, and Nate Heim. Dan Dums closed the nominations. Ron Heim seconded. New Directors will be Mark Webber, Hank Petit and Nate Heim for a two year term.

Discussion of the need for Directors and Officers Insurance

There was discussion on Directors and Officers Insurance. We already have this insurance. Dan Dums made a motion to continue the Directors and Officers Insurance. Bob seconded. Motion passed.

Duane gave a summary of our past general liability insurance at approximately \$986 per year. Duane also reported we attempted to get general liability insurance for this conference. The price kept going up when adding additional insureds until the point where the directors decided \$800 for two days of coverage of our conference which had very limited liability was too expensive.

After discussion, Dan made a motion we look at getting general liability and eventually fundraiser event insurance. Bob seconded. Motion passed with Hank voting opposed.

Log Building Leadership Alliance

Bob gave a summary of what the Log Building Leadership Alliance (LBLA) is and what is coming in the future. This Alliance is working towards registering to become a 501c Non-Profit entity. The hope is that this alliance can look at problems which are common to mass timber associations. Bob Kenel is the president of the LBLA. To date, Paul Peoples has received commitments for \$20,000 funding from various industry entities towards the \$33,700 figure which is the latest estimate of the cost for the literature review. As things are developing, things are changing.

NOTE: The GLLCA has been sending John Schroeder and Bob Kenel as our representatives to these meetings.

Duane made a motion for the GLLCA to cover the transportation and lodging of one representative to go to the next two LBLA meetings not to exceed \$1,200.00. Mark seconded. Motion passed with Donovan Dums, Dan Dums and Ruth Dums opposed.

Date, time and location of next Annual General Meeting

There was discussion on the location of the next conference. Duane said there was a possibility of doing a pre-sold fundraiser project near Cambridge, Minnesota. After discussion, Duane made a motion that the next conference location be in Cambridge, Minnesota with Superior Shores at Two Harbors, Minnesota as an alternate location. Chris Seconded. Motion passed.

Additions to the Agenda:

e. Discussion of Deb & Mike's proposal for GLLCA members to help at the Hayward Lumberjack World Championships in 2018.

After the discussion, Bob made a motion for the GLLCA to volunteer to help as a group effort with Mike Hansen at the Hayward Lumberjack World Championships. Hank Seconded. Motion passed. Chris opposed. Mike Hansen has volunteered to be the chairman and work on details.

f. Donovan asked to add reimbursement for people who presented at this year's conference.

After discussion, Donovan made a motion to give non-member presenters a 2-year membership in the Association. Chris Seconded. Motion passed.

More discussion lead to an agreement that we should give T-Shirts or ball caps to our home tour owners. Business Manager will see that this is taken care of.

g. Hank asked to add discussion of changing the Code of Ethics in the By-Laws. He wants to remove the reference to the ICC 400.

After discussion, Hank made a motion to remove No. 6 in the Code of Ethics in the GLLCA By-Laws and the same on the GLLCA website. Ruth Seconded. Motion passed.

Dan Dums made a motion to adjourn. Mike seconded. Meeting adjourned.



2018 GLLCA CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

May 18th & 19th, 2018 - COVE POINT LODGE, Beaver Bay, MN

Thursday, May 17th, 2018

7:00 p.m. Board of Directors Meeting

Friday, May 18th, 2018

7:30 to 8:00	Registration
7:00 to 8:00	Breakfast
8:00 to 9:15	Demonstration of a Lock Notch by Duane Sellman
9:15 to 10:30	Restoration Demonstration by Frank Vanderveur
10:30 to 11:00	BREAK
11:00 to 12:00	Roundtable Discussion on Making up the Deficit in our GLLCA Budget
12:00 to 1:00	Lunch
1:00 to 3:00	Blower Door Test – Mike Senty
3:00 to 3:15	BREAK
3:15 to 4:30	Talk from a Log Home Appraiser - Tentative
4:30 to 5:00	Break
5:00 to 6:30	Supper
6:30 to 7:00	Open Discussions
7:00	Fundraiser Auction

Saturday, May 19th, 2018

7:00 to 8:00	Breakfast
8:00 to 9:00	LBLA (Log Bldg. Leadership Alliance) by Bob Kenel
9:00 to 9:30	BREAK
9:30 to 11:30	Annual General Meeting Chaired by President John Schroeder
11:30 to 1:00	Lunch
1:00 to 2:00	Log Blasting Techniques – Derek Brekke
2:00 to 5:00	Tech Talk - By All Attendees
5:00 to 6:00	Supper
6:00 to 7:00	Slideshow/Supper