

## VIEW FROM THE MILL

By Levi Hochstetler

Ohio has been blessed with a mild winter so far. We did, however, have a cold snap in mid-January, enough that the young folks got to do some ice skating. Today, February 8th, we are expecting 60 degrees and sunny!

Next week, we will have our annual three-day log home builder's workshop. This is a good time to have it, before the spring building rush. This year, we have 30 participants. We hope to build a small cabin to help defray some of the cost.

We enjoyed nature stories from a longtime friend of the family, David Kline, at our company's Christmas banquet. The relationship started way back in my Grandfather Hochstetler's Guernsey cow milking days. My dad, when he farmed, also milked Guernsey's. The Klines were several generational Guernsey people as well. David and his wife, Elsie, live in the Doddy house next to their daughter and her husband, who now live in the big house and do the main farming. David enjoys writing, gardening and helping out on the farm when needed. This becomes less frequent as their grandchildren get older. They publish the *Farming Magazine* and he has several good natural history type books to his credit.

Spring is around the corner. Already, Mr. Skunk, possum and coon are out and about looking for a mate, evident by their demise along many a country road. Judging by their antics, the Blue Birds and the Red-tail Hawks are also thinking it's that time! Is it also the time to start building your log home haven? Read the articles on "Health of Your Home" and "Don't Wait to Build Your Dream Home" and it will give you an urge to move ahead now. — Levi

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## Will Your New Home be Healthy?

— by Levi E. Hochstetler

It can be! According to the World Health Organization, being healthy should mean, "A state of complete physical, mental and social well-being." Being healthy in these three points is largely based on the environment we live in. Most of us are well-informed and concerned about the air quality on the outside and how that could potentially affect our health. However, many seem to be indifferent and complacent to the environment on the inside. Yet, with the average person spending 90% of their time indoors, there may be nothing that has a more profound impact on a person's overall well-being than their indoor environment!



Government regulators are working on phasing out VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds) and other contaminants in building products. However, mostly from the standpoint of what it may be doing to the atmosphere or, at best, what it's doing to the person installing it. More should be done on what it is doing inside our homes considering that it's a known health hazard — not only when first installed but years later in the form of out-gassing.

*continued on page 11*

## Don't Wait to Build Your Dream Log Home!

— by Nathan Hochstetler

Are you waiting for interest rates or lumber prices to come down or for better timing to build your dream log home? If so, you may have a while to wait or you may never get the chance. Here are some things you might take into consideration before filing away your dream to build for a later date.

Let's say you were 60 years old in 1971 and the interest rate of 7.33% would have made you halt your building project till the rate got lower. You would not have been ready to build your dream home until 22 years later when the rate finally got below 7.33%. While you were waiting for interest rates to drop, real estate prices quadrupled. In this case, it would have made sense to marry the house and date the rate.

Waiting to build a log home to save on costs never seems to work out to the benefit of home buyers. You are not the only ones thinking interest rates are too high. And, when you think they have reached

*continued on page 2*

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Optional basement adds 1,012 sq. ft. 2 bd, 1 ba, recreation area, and space for storage.



# Don't Wait to Build Your Dream Log Home!

*(continued from page 1)*



the right level, you won't be the only one thinking the exact same thing. This can create a building rush we may never have experienced before. Now you end up paying more for the material than what you saved by getting lower interest rates. Keep in mind the home supply in America is at its lowest level in 40 years. We have a pent-up demand ready to be released!

If you're not concerned about interest rates but waiting till lumber prices come down, act quickly before folks think that interest rates are low enough. Due to the pent-up demand, with interest rates going down it will likely bring substantial increases in material prices similar to what was experienced in 2021-2022. In our 40 years' experience we have never seen an actual home being built for less by waiting, it always seems to climb. Commodity framing lumber goes up and down but custom items like cabinets, exterior doors, and windows typically steadily increase in price by 3-7% annually. We have already heard from the window, door and metal roof manufacturers that there will be a 3-5% price increase this spring.

Currently, builders are more interested in talking about custom projects than they were a year ago. Lead times are shorter, and builders are more willing to accommodate your needs. We haven't seen any price adjustments from them and I don't expect we will. There is still a labor shortage and the high demand in builders this past year made the wages go up and we all know people are not willing to work for the same company and take a pay cut.

"I'm not ready to build till down the road," you may say. A young couple, the DeAnglos from Pennsylvania, will ask you, "why wait?" "We are so glad we built our log home when we did. We hear a lot of younger people saying they are going to wait for their dream home till later. Don't wait to build till you're older. We are still young and we hope to enjoy many years in our dream home that we love."

You have heard it, there is no better time to build than now! Don't wait for the spring rush in May. You may be too late! Pull that dream out again and sign the dotted line on the proposal before the pricing needs to be updated. 🏠

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## THE LIFE OF A LOG HOME OWNER

Are you considering building a log home but getting bombarded by family and friends with all the reasons you shouldn't? Listen to folks that experienced log home living!

This December will mark our 19th year living in our Hochstetler log home. My Dad and I finished the cabin on December 3rd, 2004 and my wife and I and our first son moved in the next day. Nineteen years and three children later we love our "Hudson" log home even more! It is still our dream home and it has been a great blessing to be able to raise our four boys in our log cabin in the Sweetwater, New Jersey woods. We wanted to pass along this picture to say thank you, Hochstetler Log Homes!



– Cartwrights, NJ

We are writing to express to Hochstetler Log Homes our great appreciation for the most beautifully built log home you have given us. Every detail was done masterfully and with care. From the moment we wake up in the morning to the moment driving in from work at the end of the day, this home brings our family such happiness.

The quality of the log, doors, windows, deck, roof and detailing are wonderful. We would highly recommend Hochstetler Log Homes to any prospective home builders.

– Fischers, OH



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# The Perfect Getaway



Photography by Style Life Photography

— by Nathan Hochstetler

As a young boy, Tim Muchnok loved going out to his uncle's hunting cabin. "I always wanted my own log cabin" says Tim, "and now, years later, with my own son wanting to go hunting it seemed like the perfect timing to make this dream come true. I wanted to build something that the family could have wonderful memories of when they got to be my age."

They were looking for the right piece of property close to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, that would be good for hunting and a family getaway when they stumbled across an 80-acre farm that seemed like the diamond-in-the-rough. It was an old pig farm that needed a lot of clean-up work to be ready to build on. There were three old barns to be taken down. There was a muddy swamp in the valley that the Muchnoks cleaned out and made into a beautiful lake stocked with fish and a place for wildlife to gather for water. The topography of the property was perfect for the cabin. The cabin would be located on the side of the hill overlooking the pond with the forested Pennsylvania mountains beyond. A picturesque location!

Tim and his wife Amy went to the 2019 Log Home Show in Seven Springs, Pennsylvania in search of a log home supplier and builder to put together their dream log home. There were a few things that made Hochstetler Log Homes stand out from the rest. "They let us go further into the process before having to sign a contract, mentioned Tim, and they were very pleasant to work with, giving us many options and investment amounts. We would look through magazines and show our ideas to Jake our builder and Hochstetler Log Homes, and they would never give us a no. One of these was the round hand-peeled center post with the flared roots between the kitchen and the great-room, which is so cool."

As the Muchnoks went through the design phase the home kept growing. Not only did they want a hunting cabin for Tim and his son to hang out, but also a place where Amy and her daughter could come and enjoy with their friends. Some



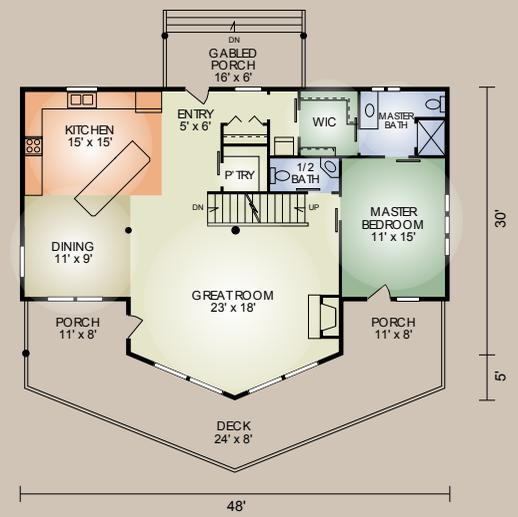
modifications had to be made to the original plan. Larger glass windows were added in the great room prowl to create more light in the interior. The basement was finished out with three additional bedrooms and a garage for storage of the utility vehicle.

One of the biggest frustrations on the build for Muchnoks was the lighting. “We wished we had someone experienced to help us with selecting the lights,” said Tim, “Amy went online and came up with the selections — which I think turned out beautiful — but we invested a lot of time and had no idea what to look for.”

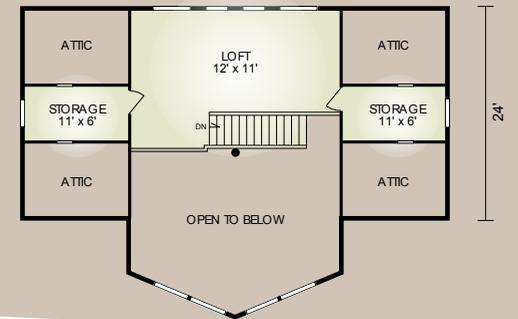
Everything we wanted is here. Lots of wildlife: deer, bobcats and we even had a mountain lion on our camera...and the pond is stocked with fish. It's the perfect getaway for our family and friends. 🏡



*First  
Floor Plan*



*Second  
Floor Plan*



*For additional information about this home, please contact Hochstetler Log Homes at 800-368-1015.*

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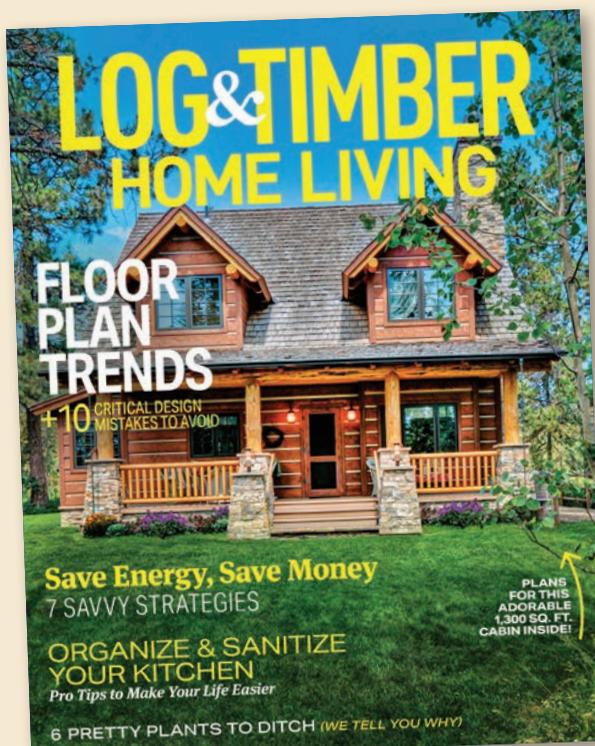
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# Will Your New Home be Healthy?

(continued from page 1)

Still, the trend is to use more and more plastic, paint, caulking, MDF wall panels and cabinets, OSB, drywall, along with LVP and LVT flooring, vinyl or MDF trim, etc. Most of these components are loaded with glue and other chemicals. This equates into exposing us to more formaldehydes and endless other volatile organic compounds, VOCs. Take formaldehyde, as one example, it can cause headaches, nausea, dizziness, memory loss and even depression. Doctors claim that 50% of all respiratory diseases come from poor indoor air quality! Many of these chemicals will slowly out-gas into the home for years.

And, what makes matters even worse is that our homes are becoming tighter and tighter in the name of becoming more energy-efficient. We wrap the outside and cover the inside with plastic and drywall, sandwiching fiberglass or urethane type insulation in-between. I can relate to what one writer wrote, "It's like sticking our heads into plastic bags!"

Like the government, the general public seems to be conscious of wanting to build a "green home" in order to save the earth or improve the outside environment. Yet, most don't consider that their own family's very health and personal wellbeing may be in jeopardy, depending on what components are installed inside their home. Consequently, the ones that stay indoors more — the young, the elderly and the chronically ill — are also the ones that are most susceptible to these toxins.

There is miserably little that we as individuals can do to improve the outside environment. The same may be true for the inside of our work place. The good news is we can do much to improve the air quality on the inside of our own homes. And, not only that, depending on the building material we choose, it can have a positive impact on us and our family's mental and social well-being. With over half of our time spent indoors at home (sleeping included), it behooves me to think that it may be to our best interest to buck

the plastic and glue building trend. You don't have to be swept along. You can demand better! Insist that your supplier or architectural designer incorporates healthy components inside your home. And, most importantly, any material on the inside that you will be exposed to.

Experts are saying wood has proven to be very beneficial to our physical and mental well-being. Studies suggest that when you have at least 45% exposed wood in your home, it can lower stress, make you feel more comfortable, lower blood pressure and improve your intellectual functioning. This does not take into account that with solid wood construction there is far less glue, VOC's such as formaldehyde, and other toxins.

Solid wood construction, "think log homes" does it all. Wood is a far healthier choice for the inside and a lot more earth friendly. A renewable resource that can be used in nearly its natural state. This means it takes very little energy to make it usable for a building product. In addition, very little harmful chemicals such as glues are used to build them. The wood finish on the inside of your logs can be water-based with almost zero VOC's.

And, what's more, what's good for your health is also good for the environment. Log homes natural logs have a lot more renewable and biodegradable products than a typical stick home. And, to top that, it takes substantially less fossil fuels and energy to produce. According to the USDA Wood Hand Book; to produce a ton of concrete it will generate 8 times more carbon emissions than in producing wood, 21 times more for steel, and 75 times more to produce plastic! This gives wood a distinct environmental advantage over other building material. This means that a solid log wall building is the "greenest home" available on the market.

A log home is ahead of otherwise similar homes in being energy-efficient as well. If done right, they typically come in at about 2.0 to 3.0 air displacement per hour on the blower door tests. This is better than ENERGY STAR requirements (3. ACH in Zone 3 & up) and well below code. Almost exactly where you want it, to minimize energy loss but not so tight that it requires you to buy a lot of expensive equipment in order to maintain good air quality. Yet another healthy feature.

To summarize; a log home is healthier, takes much less energy to manufacture and is made from wood — a sustainable material that will never be depleted as long as wood grows. And, if that wasn't enough, while wood is growing it takes carbon dioxide out of the environment (termed sequestering) and stores it much like a battery does energy. Compare that to an open mine pit to extract iron ore for steel, gypsum for drywall, or an oil well to extract crude to make plastic, vinyl and fiberglass! Never in history have humans been able to substitute and improve on wood as a more healthy building material and that's what log homes are made of!

Let me conclude by quoting Steve D. Lykins P.E., "Wood is special. Wood is unique. Wood has a positive impact on our physical and mental well-being as humans. Wood makes us happy. The comfort that wood provides is being rediscovered after trying other building materials for a few hundred years only to realize that wood does it best." 🏠

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# CABIN FEVER

## View From Above

— by *Bill Dinkins*

A light mist rises over the colorful fields and woodlots below as I soar peacefully 100' above. It is fall, October 15 to be exact, and leaves are at their peak—rich brown oaks and blazing red and yellow maples dot the landscape.

I'm a Red-tailed Hawk, soaring above an Amish farm in North Central Ohio, in search of food. My 4'-wide wingspan allows me to cover my home base effortlessly. It's like a dance in the sky—flop, flop, flop...soar; flop, flop, flop...soar. A rhythmic beat I hear as I search the ground below. I'm the largest hawk and, I think, the most beautiful! With a rich brown back and head, white chest with brown spots, and, of course, a red tail, I'm distinctive and beautiful!

It's early morning, my favorite time of day, and I'm flying above the Miller farm. Mist is rising slowly off the farm pond and another day is unfolding. There's Mrs. Miller, Amanda, dressed in a pastel pink dress, carrying a basket of lettuce and carrots back to the house. It's been a good year for them, just the right amount of rain. Corn, on the other hand, not so good. But that's the way it goes. There are up and down years. Fortunately, always enough. Husband, Joseph, and son, Andy, are picking corn with the team of Belgians. I'm following them in case I spot a mouse scurrying away. Meanwhile, Emma, the oldest daughter of ten children, is putting clothes on the line, and with the sunny day ahead they should be dry this afternoon. Little sister, Anna, age 6, is feeding the chickens. She's not too fond of her chore since that mean rooster always chases her. The dog, Rex, is out by the fence and slowly turning in circles to do his thing.

I don't have a GPS (don't need one), but many folks do, and they travel here in droves to see the Amish and are intrigued by their simple and wholesome life. I'm sure they're fascinated by their lifestyle before they return to their hectic, computer-driven lives! I often see cars slow down as they pass an Amish school house. Even the girls like to play baseball with the boys. And, some are better!

But, back to my travels. I leave the nest each day at daybreak in search of food, while my mate guards the nest. We have two young ones, and she is on constant alert for predators like coons and eagles that could be a threat. I have a territory about two



miles in any direction from the nest. I do the "family shopping" and look for small rodents like mice and voles to feed the family. I have keen eyesight and can spot these small critters from great distances easily. Today, it's a little more difficult with the mist and all, but by 10:00 a.m. it should be gone. The farm is just south of Walnut Creek, in the heart of Amish country. They call it "Little Switzerland," for its scenic beauty of rolling hills and rich farmland. I call it my hunting ground!

I'm mesmerized by the breathtaking landscape below and have to remind myself that this is no vacation, but a trip to the "grocery." So far, though, I haven't seen a thing. Across the cornfield and alongside the woods I glide. The only sounds I hear are the faint rustling of leaves below and the raucous squawk of a crow in the distance.

Suddenly, I see movement. It's a field mouse. Maybe he's ventured too far from his hole. They're difficult to catch and can turn on a dime. I start my descent and increase my speed, faster and faster...getting closer, 30', now 20', now 10'. I tuck in my wings and extend my talons...WHAP. Got him! Shopping's over.

I'll return to the family—the kids will be happily waiting with mouths open wide! 🏠

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