



# Mill-Direct News

*Living the Log Home Lifestyle*

Spring 2019

## VIEW FROM THE MILL

**By Levi Hochstetler**

Yesterday, we completed our builder's workshop. We had a very capable group of 21 students. Some came as far as Florida and Montana. This helps to assure that there will be good quality builders available for our clients. Also, we trust they learned a few helpful ideas that will make them more efficient and reduce the problems that can arise from inexperienced log home builders.

Not only did they learn how to properly stack logs, but also installing timbers, panels, windows, doors, finishes and other components. We focus on things that are unique and important in building a well-crafted log home. Having things done correctly not only benefits our clients, but everyone that ever buys a log home... and the log home industry as a whole.

Often, framing lumber goes up 20 to 30% during the summer building season, and it's not unusual to have OSB sheathing even doubling!



We now buy enough framing material to last us most of the year. This allows us to hold our prices for the year. Often clients take advantage of our "price hold" by placing their order before the end of the year. We, in turn, use these funds to "winter buy" our framing material when prices are normally lower.

*Happy log home dreams, Levi.*

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## Buy or Build! - *by Bill Dinkins*

The decision to build a new log home or buy an existing home can seem like a daunting task, but it doesn't have to be if you are informed. Fortunately, most of our customers have lived in several conventional homes during their lifetime and are aware of their lifestyle needs. Convenience, comfort and practicality become even more important as we get older. A first-floor laundry, built-in kitchen pantry, and office area are just a few examples. Existing homes may or may not have these updates. Many newer kitchens have impressive decorative touches as well: tile or hardwood floors; color-coordinated granite counter tops, shelves and appliances; and various hanging lamps are popular. Perhaps you just need to downsize, since your kids are grown and on their own. Unlike buying an existing home where you may have to sacrifice some needs, a custom-designed home offers you the unique advantage of creating your home to fit your lifestyle and the satisfaction that comes with doing it yourself. And, you're not alone - our experienced designers can help.

Log homes have an innate warmth and charm that conventional homes simply do not. The expansive color and grain of the wood, and the strength of the exposed timber beams is always a welcome sign. Most people are concerned about maintenance, and

*continued on page 7*



*Our popular 2,000 sq.ft. McKay model includes 3 bedrooms and 3 full baths*

## Our Partners/Suppliers

*(continued from Winter 18/19 Issue) - by Levi Hochstetler*

**Hardwood Flooring:** There must be over a hundred choices of companies that supply or produce hardwood flooring. Many of these companies could easily take care of our needs; but one company that seems to be ahead of the pack is Armstrong Flooring, a well-known brand name. First of all, they are a national company that has been in business for over 100 years and are plenty big enough with over 600 million in annual sales to serve us. All this is on top of having super brand support, a lifetime warranty and better finish technology than most.

Also important to us is that they are one of several flooring manufacturers that buy raw lumber from us. This assures us that their raw material is being sourced domestically in the Appalachian hardwood area.

Appalachian hardwoods are known for their quality in lighter and consistent



*A few samples of hardwood flooring available*

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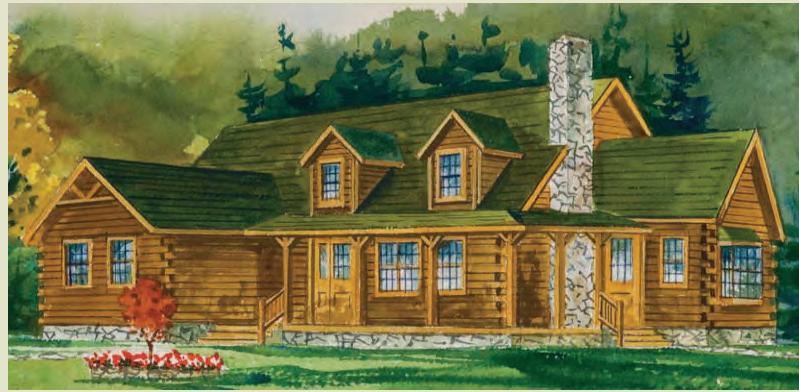
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## FEATURED FLOOR PLAN

# Loudonville

Sq. ft. 2232

3 BR / 2 1/2 BA



The Loudonville features dramatic curb appeal with its wraparound porch, dining area bay window and timbered gable. Inside, the fully timbered, open-concept great room and stone fireplace greet your guests. Plus, you'll love the step-saving convenience of the first-floor laundry and computer nook off the kitchen. The showpiece master bedroom includes a walk-in closet and master bath with walk-in shower. The dining area opens to the large rear deck and affords plenty of space for hosting parties and social events. You'll love this thoughtfully designed plan for its practicality and versatility.



## Our Partners/Suppliers - *continued from page 1*

color, refined grain and being more stable than their southern counterpart.

Choosing a floor for your new log home is a big decision. The floor you select has a large impact on the overall performance and appearance of your home. We believe that choosing Armstrong flooring for your home is a good decision; a brand that has a long history of dedication to quality. Armstrong is the brand that competitors compare themselves to.

They have available a large variety of different flooring. Some of the choices in hardwood species include both white and red oak, maple, hickory, birch, cherry and walnut. These are available in both solid and engineered wood. Finish options are almost endless. In some of the specious they have as many as ten different color options in three lusters: high gloss, medium and low. Textures include scraped, smooth, brushed and skip-planed.

Hardwoods, by nature are hard and scratch resistance, in particular oak, maple and hickory. Thus, it's much better suited for flooring than softwoods. However, Armstrong has even improved on the hardness with their unique "Performance Plus" finish. It makes the wood up to 2 times harder than traditional hardwoods!

Armstrong Flooring also makes other flooring products as well. For more information you can go online @ [www.armstrongflooring.com](http://www.armstrongflooring.com)

**Stone Veneer:** Stone veneer is a must-have for most log home buyers. They love the rustic and earthy effect it has on the home. Few things complement or "make" a log

home more than a fireplace covered with stone veneer. In most people's minds, a log home isn't complete without a stone fireplace or at least a stone chimney for the wood burner. Nearly everyone, when they think of a log home, they imagine having the family gathered around a fireplace telling stories, playing games or simply enjoying each other's presence. Or, they imagine a place where they can snuggle up to a warm fireplace with a cup of coffee and enjoy a good book. Furthermore, do you ever see a painting of a cozy log home



*What winter evening would be complete without a warm fire and the family gathered around the fireplace*

nestled in the woods without smoke drifting from a stone chimney? Certainly stone veneer on the chimney and the foundation does add "wow" to a log home.

Knowing this has made it a tall order to find the right stone company to partner with. That is, until we found ProVia Stone. ProVia's stone is carefully selected from unique geographic regions and then skillfully molded and cast. They take special care to capture nature's beauty of the undercut for stunning realism. In production, their stones are meticulously colorized using raw pigments and oxides, providing richness to every stone.

They use of the best material available, including superior shale aggregates. Each mixture of base material is quality controlled for batch-to-batch consistency. Their leading edge processes and equipment ensure that every step in the creation of their products is

*continued on page 3*

optimized for aesthetics and consistency. A relentless pursuit of quality and excellence in products and services distinguishes them from other choices of stone manufactures that we had. Also, this helps us to deliver real value to every one of our customers.

ProVia's color palettes are designed to give you the confidence in choosing the right stone color for your home. They have gathered inspirations from natural settings across the United States. With names like seashore, desert sands, fossil, glacier, cavern, mesa, timber, copper, mesquite Spanish moss and shale. The choices vary in color from light, ivory-colored desert sand to darker, gray-looking shale. Their grout comes in many different colors as well, where you can either color match or offset.

Stone profile choices are Dry Stack, Limestone, Fieldstone, Ledge Stone, Precision Fit, Terra Cut, Natural Cut and River Rock. With their deep undercuts it creates shadows that look very natural and realistic. So realistic you have to turn them over to see that they are manufactured! Also available are matching cap stones, hearth stones and trim of all shapes and sizes such as mantels, brackets, keystones and stones to attach lighting fixtures.

All their stone products carry a lifetime limited warranty against faulty manufacturing process or defective materials – when properly installed and maintained in normal exposure and use. ProVia guarantees their stone product against chipping, flaking, unsightly discoloration or any other serious deterioration. For their most current information you can visit their web @provia.com/warranty.

ProVia stone is voluntarily tested and certified through an independent third-party product certification agency IAPMO. They meet and/or exceed ASTM, IBC and IRC standards.

So far, after more than five years, we have not been disappointed with our choice of partnering with ProVia as our main stone supplier. Having ProVia as a partner allows us to offer stone veneer to our clients, knowing that even the most meticulous customer will be satisfied. And, what's more, with their continuing improvements they only get better. Better service, better quality, more choices of color and profiles. I believe that the line out of their mission statement, "to serve by caring for details in ways others won't," certainly rings true with ProVia. 

*This story will be continued in the next issue of Mill-Direct News*

## Register now for our March Log Home Builder Workshop

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Our February workshop was filled, so we are repeating this March 19, 20, 21st.

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# *Wild & Wonderful*

## HOMES REVISITED

by Bill Dinkins



*Clayton and Susan Levingood's beautiful home made the front cover of the 2012 Log Home Living Magazine's buyer's guide!*

A common theme among log home owners is a fervent love of the great outdoors, and Bob and Jane Ann Anderson's home in Charleston, West Virginia, certainly epitomizes that state's "Wild and Wonderful" theme. "Wild" because it is nestled atop a mountain beside heavily-timbered Kanawha State Forest and "Wonderful" because...well, you just have to be there to appreciate this natural paradise. It is God's country! The Anderson's selected Hochstetler to be their log home supplier since it was one of the few that had the 8x8 Double-Round logs they wanted, and, after meeting with the owner, Levi, they were sold on the quality. Like many customers, the Anderson's filled their home with antiques and family heirlooms, including a massive chandelier, which Jane described as "shabby chic."

Clayton and Susan Levingood's home, although not "wild" still embraces the "wonderful" part of the theme. Perched on top of a hill near Minerva, Ohio, and surrounded by 17 acres, it offers a wonderful view of the surrounding countryside. The Levingoods had always dreamed of building a log home and finally decided the "mountaintop" view from their horse farm would be perfect. After considerable research they took their plans to Hochstetler, and with the help of their in-house designers, came up with the final blueprints that offered incredible views from the six outside porches and the enclosed sunroom. When asked what he would change, Clayton replied, "We wouldn't change a thing." Now that is the result of careful planning and teamwork.



*Jane Ann Anderson's impressive display of antiques in the dining area.*

Steve and Adie Miller also loved the “wild and wonderful” ambiance of a log home and its rustic setting. They purchased 40 “Wild” acres of land in rural Wisconsin with the idea of someday building their dream home there. Adie was somewhat lukewarm to the idea until they visited the McKay model. Suddenly, their “dream” started materializing. Their builder convinced them that Hochstetler was, in his words, “the easiest to work with and unmatched in quality and value.” That made their decision easy. Steve ordered logs with a rough cut finish, and with the weathered grey surface, they gave his home a true rustic look. They get a “wild and wonderful” feeling each time they look at the “Hickory Meadows”, an area with two large Hickory trees in a meadow surrounded by woods and frequented by nature’s critters - large and small.

Donnie Thimme's life involved “wild” for a different reason. On April 5, 2010, his life would change forever when he followed three firemen up a hill to help extinguish a forest fire and accidentally stepped on a downed power line. In an instant, 7500 volts surged through his body as he was helpless to move. He was life-flighted to a Columbus hospital where doctors saved his life and later called him, “miracle boy.” Donnie, with help from close friends, Jeff and Deb, envisioned another miracle...a log home specifically designed for him. Working with his friends and in-house designers at Hochstetler, he created the perfect plan. It included a special kitchen island, a chairlift to transport him upstairs, oversized doors for his wheelchair and an oversized garage with a stall for his beloved horse, “Duke.”

“Wild and Wonderful” for Jim and Reva McGinnis meant building their dream home atop a forested mountain in Kentucky. The wooded 50 acres seemed ideal for a log home, and after 25 years in heavy construction Jim was ready for a more relaxed, quieter lifestyle. Reva was just as enthusiastic about building their home on this little, “slice of heaven.” The rear deck overlooks a woods and gives them an up-close-and-personal look at nature and its inhabitants...deer, turkeys, and squirrels regularly patrol the land, not to mention the numerous songbirds that serenade them daily. A neighbor even spotted a rare black bobcat nearby recently!

The picturesque rolling hills and woods of central Ohio provided the perfect home site for Steve and Ginny Williams. Steve had roamed these hills as a youngster and thought the family farm would someday be his home. When he and Ginny visited the McKay model the wheels were suddenly set in motion. They liked the style of the McKay but wanted to downsize. Although their custom designed home is only 1300 sq.ft. it is precisely what is needed for the two of them and their 6 dogs! Ginny was asked what she liked most about her new home and replied, “I don’t have to paint the walls.” Their home is full of antiques, including a country cupboard rescued from a house fire on the farm, a mantle crafted from an old barn beam, and a miniature hand-carved Noah’s ark. All are cherished family heirlooms. Although the home doesn’t fit the “wild” image of others it nevertheless is “wonderful” and is a dream come true.

*Donnie Thimmes' worked with Hochstetler's designers in custom designing his kitchen which offers easy accessibility for him.*



*McGinnis's home sits on top of a mountain on 50 wooded acres in Kentucky.*

*continued on page 6*

## Hochstetler Log Homes Revisited!

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For Dan and Margaret Shepherd, "wild and wonderful" meant staying in Ohio and building their home on 127 scenic acres in Ashland county, where their two children were raised. In fact, Dan Jr. and Kathy frequently rode their horses on the same ground. The Shepherd's envisioned building a log home there and after vacationing in a log home in Alaska and basking in its peaceful solitude their plans suddenly took shape. After checking out several manufacturers, they settled on Hochstetler. They loved the McKay model but wanted to make a few changes. They added 4' to the overall width to accommodate their large round bed and also added a utility room to the back of the house to house Dan's "toys." Margaret also insisted on 3' interior doors and is glad she did since Dan had a stroke and was wheelchair-bound a few months later. Their biggest surprise - the lower heating bills in the winter. Both were amazed how seldom the furnace kicked on.

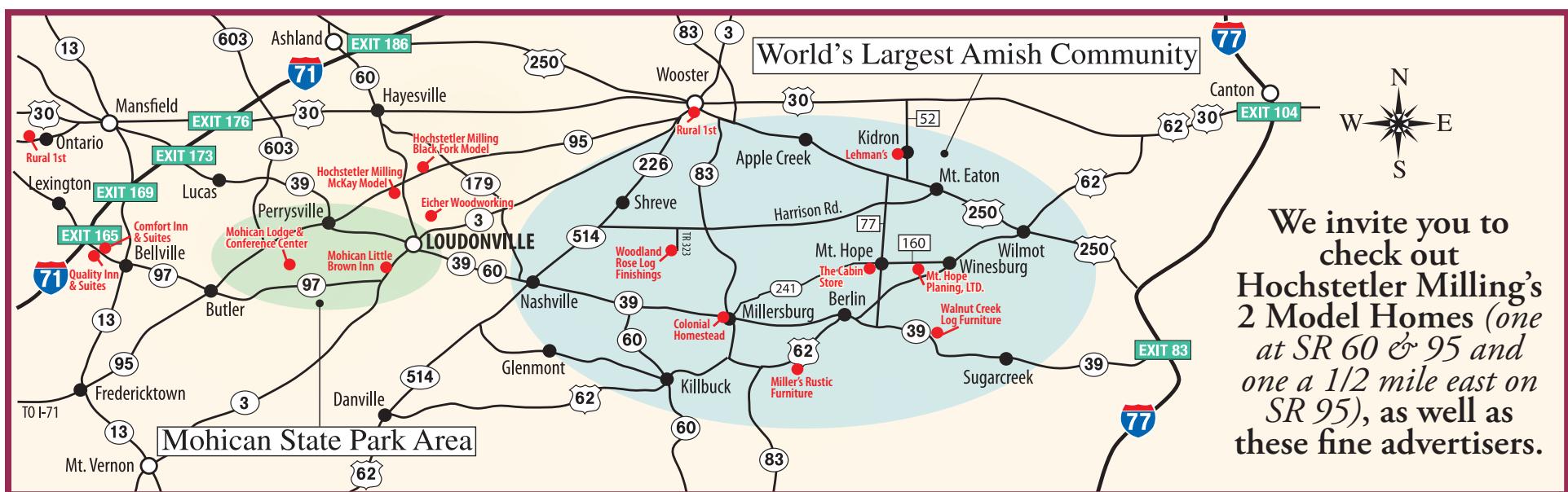
The Shepherd's have traveled worldwide but still would not trade their "wild and wonderful" home in Ohio. 



Miller's life-long dream home sits among 40 scenic acres in rural Wisconsin.



McGinnis' open-concept Great Room features a large stone fireplace and soaring, exposed rafters.



## Buy or Build! - continued from page 1

we tell them, usually you'll have to re-coat the exterior every 3-5 years, while seldom if ever, re-coating the interior. Meanwhile, you may have to repaint your interior walls on a conventional home every 5-7 years. Some people express a concern about too much wood. But actually there are many interior walls where you can paint over drywall such as in the bathrooms or bedrooms. Basically, any partition walls.

Another major benefit of a new log home is it's energy-efficiency. Most logs are very energy-efficient due to their tongue-and-groove profile. A rubber gasket is placed atop a raised "tongue" and effectively seals off any moisture or air penetration. Logs themselves are also more energy-efficient than conventional walls due to thermal mass (a log's inherent ability to store energy). In short, a log home stays warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer! You can expect up to 30% savings in heating and cooling bills over a year's time. In comparison, many older homes do not have sufficient insulation. Newer windows and doors are another energy-saving idea. Our Andersen 400 series windows, for example, have an outstanding energy-rating which can save you substantially on your heating bills. In addition, you may even qualify for a tax credit.

There are several aesthetic features that make a new log home attractive. For instance, the focal point of the great room is usually the fireplace. Material can be actual stone or, more commonly, manufactured stone which is available in a multitude of colors and shapes and at 1/3 the cost. You make the choice! And, to add another decorative touch, why not have a custom-cut mantle cut from a tree on your property majestically perched above the fireplace. The opportunities to custom design and decorate your new home are virtually endless.

Unlike new homes, existing homes have also experienced "wear and tear" in several areas and replacing or repairing can be costly. Always check out the roof and the condition of the shingles or roof covering; the basement and any signs of water problems; the furnace and water heater, for instance. What are the ages of appliances and are they still under warranty? How about the condition of windows? These items

are no concern in a new custom home.

As you can see, there are many things to consider, but keep in mind you are not alone in your quest - we are here to help. Whether you choose an existing floor plan or have our highly-qualified designers custom-design your home, we feel confident the result will be a dream come true.

And, the way to get started is to schedule an appointment with one of our sales associates who will guide you through your "log home journey." 



The McKay Open-Concept Great Room features a stone fireplace with large log mantle and exposed roof beams.

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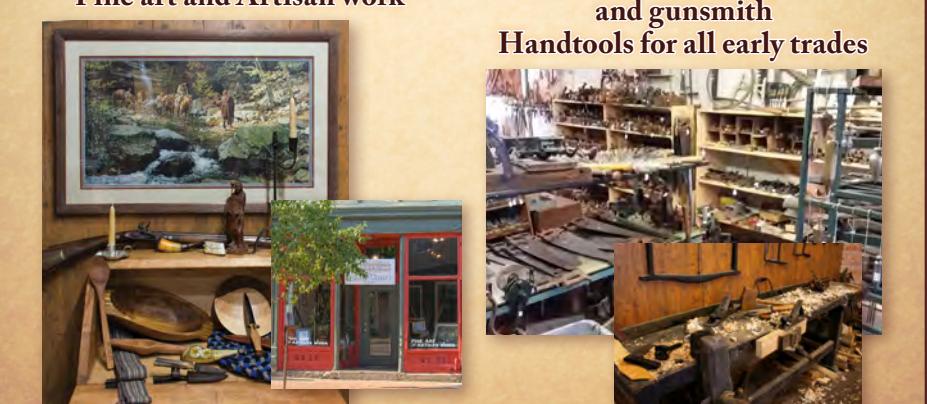
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# CABIN FEVER “Good News, Bad News!” by Bill Dinkins

For many die-hard fishermen winter is viewed with a pendulum of emotions - it is a final curtain for the open-water walleye and bass fishermen but a season of opportunity for the steelhead fishermen. So it is a mix of good and bad.

I fall into the all-season group - there is seldom a day that I don't enjoy fishing. The steelhead offers two seasons of opportunities - spring and winter. For those hardy souls willing to brave the elements, winter can be rewarding, as well as bone-chilling cold. Fortunately, there are a few days when the temperature reaches a "balmy" 30 degrees and I "put on the layers" and head up to Rocky River, west of Cleveland.

After checking the forecast the night before, I got up at 5:30 a.m. one mid-December morning, quickly dressed and was on my way up 71. I stopped in Ashland for breakfast and a steaming cup o' "joe." Left there about 7 and reached my favorite "honey hole" about 8, just as the sun was peeking over the eastern hills surrounding the "Rocky." Well, my "honey hole" was already taken so I ventured downstream, looking for any white flashes in the water, indicating spawning activity. After a couple casts into deeper water I hooked into something. I lifted my rod and immediately saw the problem - I was snagged on a rock on the opposite shore. As I made my way across, the water became deeper and suddenly cascaded over my right wader. Wow, that water was cold! Nevertheless, I forged onward and finally got my "go to" lure, a 1/4 ounce blue and silver Cleo. I headed back to the original "honey hole", a little embarrassed and getting uncomfortably colder, but still intent on getting a nice steelhead. While standing at the top of a small dam I made repeated casts into the churning, deeper pool on the other side. Finally, a hit and I instinctively reared back on the rod. Whatever was on the other end didn't like that! My line raced across the water as my rod doubled over and my reel screamed. The fish dug for the bottom, then twisted and lunged in a mighty effort to break loose. After a 10 minute battle I was able to slide him up on the wall and remove the hooks. But just to prove that I had actually caught the fish I needed proof. I had a fellow fisherman take a quick photo and placed the fish back in the water while moving him (or her) gently back and forth to regain his strength. Five minutes later he slowly swam away.

I tried a few more casts before calling it a day and headed back to my car. After discarding several layers of clothing and removing my waders I was ready to head home with an adventure for the next newsletter. As I reached into my pocket for my keys I suddenly noticed they weren't there! I retraced my steps - inside my car, around the parking area, down the path and, finally, 1/2 mile down the river, but to no avail. I had to call my wife but wasn't quite sure how to break the news. Was this a, "You'll never guess what happened" story or maybe a, "Do you want to hear the good news or bad news" account. I opted for the latter and she met me halfway with the duplicate set of keys. Luckily, a fellow fisherman provided me with a ride to meet my "not too happy" wife, who's always quick to offer her condolences. "How on earth did you do that?" So, there is often good and bad news inexplicably entwined in our lives.

By the way, there is more good news. The next day, under better light, I found my keys - they were stuck in my waders! How they got there still remains a mystery. 



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