



# Mill-Direct News

*Living the Log Home Lifestyle*

Fall 2021

## VIEW FROM THE MILL

*By Levi Hochstetler*

2021 marks our 35th year in business. Where has the time gone? None of my sons were born yet; in fact, I wasn't even married then. Today, I'm slowly handing over the reins to the boys. Recently, I assigned Joseph as the sales manager and Nathan as the marketing person. This allows me to go see more birds! Actually, I enjoy more time to help out on the floor, such as joining my fellow employees for break and stickering lumber. I think they save the light boards for me!

I'm also losing out on how to do things. As an example, I used to adjust the controls for the dry-kiln. Now I barely know how to start it up! That is okay, though; the boys and the employees do such a good job I don't need to know everything.

The drafting and design work I also used to do myself. Today, I hardly know how to make the first line on the machine. That too is good. Good for our clients. Our lead designer, Steve Lykins, after getting a degree in Architectural Engineering, did conventional homes for more than 12 years. Now, since early 2012, he has designed and engineered 100s of log and timber homes for our clients. This makes him, I believe, one of the leading log and timber home designers/engineers in the country.

Log Cabin Days is just around the corner. We were having it every other year and 2020 was the year for it. However, Covid forced us to cancel it. So now here we are in 2021 getting ready for LCD. Hope to see you!

**Hochstetler Log Homes, LTD**

552 St. Rt. 95, Loudonville, OH

**800-368-1015**

## Log Cabin Days - Sept. 17 & 18

**See our special 4-page pull-out section inside for more information and a schedule of events.**

Log Cabin Days is slated for Friday, September 17 (11-7) & Saturday, September 18 (9-5) at the Hochstetler Log Homes site, 5 miles north of Loudonville, Ohio at 552 SR 95.

- Craftsmen Demonstrating 19th Century Trades like Broom Making, Wool Spinning, Pottery, etc.
- Lumberjack Demo
- Self-Guided Log Home Tour
- Cabins and Rustic Furnishings Auction
- Delicious Food, Pastries, & Ice Cream
- Log Home-Related Exhibitors
- Log Cabin Seminars • Mill Tour
- Hand-Peeling & Hand-Hewing Demos
- Petting Zoo

Make plans today to attend this educational and fun event for the whole family.



## Building Trust for 35 Years - *by Nathan Hochstetler*

Building Trust was the vision Hochstetler Log Homes has been able to maintain over the last 35 years. Most of our builds are to be a couple's dream home and we want it to be a pleasant experience. It's always been our goal to put every client at ease and make it as easy as possible to build a log home. "When trust is built, the build is smoother"...you don't have to second guess everything that happens on the project. We want you to remember us always and be your shoulder to lean upon every time you need advice on taking care of your home.

These 35 years has been a journey of changes for the company. As Levi and Katie Hochstetler's (founders) family of eleven boys and two girls grew, so did the company to keep everyone involved in its operation. Currently, six of the boys are partners and the other five are employed, along with one son-in-law. Creating a safe environment for the family and friends to work in is what gave Levi the vigor to keep moving forward all

*continued on page 2*

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# Eagle Feather

Sq. ft. 4130  
3 BR / 3.5 BA



The Eagle Feather is a home that harkens back to the classic Adirondack styles of earlier times but with the convenience and functional updates of today. A gabled front porch welcomes guests to the spacious foyer and open-concept great room with exposed, timbered ceiling and towering stone fireplace, while a covered rear porch and deck offers an unobstructed view of nature's beauty. The master bedroom features a large walk-in closet, and master bath with spacious walk-in shower, tub, linen closet, and double sinks. A first floor pantry/ laundry room and adjoining mudroom, plus a sizable serving island in the kitchen, provide step-saving convenience and practicality. Upstairs, there are two bedrooms; one with a full bath and walk-in closet and the other with a smaller full bath.

A full set of blueprints of this plan is available. Photo and floor plans may differ slightly from actual blueprints.



## Building Trust for 35 Years - *continued from page 1*

these years. We wouldn't have been able to be where we're at today if it wouldn't have been for all the good help we have on our team. We are surely blessed!

Hochstetler would like to invite you to Log Cabin Days and help us celebrate our 35th anniversary. Visit our booth and to top it off, ask for more details for a chance to win a set of free blueprints on a home up to 2000 sq. ft. The first thirty-five to visit our booth will receive a free coffee cup. Other giveaway items will be available, as well. See our special Log Cabin Days section for all the other wonderful activities scheduled. We believe this is the best line-up of vendors and displays ever. We look forward to seeing you here.



## Log Cabin Days Lodging Directory

Mention Hochstetler Log Homes for special rates at the following locations. With multiple activities in the area book early for availability.

**BEST WESTERN PLUS HOTEL**, 240 East Liberty, Wooster, OH 44691  
Distance 24 minutes East • 330-264-7750

**HAMPTON INN**, 2055 East Main Street, Ashland, OH 44805 (Located off the Ashland Ohio I 71 exit on US RT 250) Distance 15 minutes North • 419-903-0900

**HOLIDAY INN EXPRESS**, 1392 Enterprise Parkway, Ashland, OH 44805 (Located off the Ashland Ohio I 71 exit on US RT 250) • 419-281-2900

**COMFORT INN & SPLASH HARBOR**, 855 Comfort Plaza Dr. Bellville, OH 44813  
(Located at I 71 & St. Rt. 97 Exit 165) Distance 20 minutes West • 419-886-4000  
[www.SplashHarbor.com](http://www.SplashHarbor.com)

**MOHICAN LODGE**, 1098 Co. RD 3006, Perrysville, OH 44864.  
Distance 20 minutes West • 419-938-5411 • [www.MohicanStateParkLodge.com](http://www.MohicanStateParkLodge.com)

**PLEASANT HILL LAKE PARK CABINS**, 3431 SR 95 Perrysville, OH 44864.  
Distance 15 minutes West. Stay in a Hochstetler Log Cabin. Only 6 left.  
419-938-7884 (Call park directly to book for Log Cabin Days)

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[sales@millersrusticfurniture.com](mailto:sales@millersrusticfurniture.com)

## LOG CABIN DAYS TESTIMONIALS

"My Husband and I had the pleasure of once again attending Log Cabin Days this year. We had been to them before, but not for the last three years, due to other commitments. (Our lost indeed)

We have always enjoyed coming, but this year I just had to write a note of thanks to everyone who helped make it such fun. I have no idea just how many people were involved in one way or another, but it's obvious that it's a huge undertaking, with many "hands" needed to make it successful.

The food was good, everything was clean, with items covered that had to sit out, and you had a great organization to keep the lines moving along. It was nice to see so many smiles from those serving and to hear "thank you" after purchasing something.

-- Sandra McClain

"Scott and I attended Log Cabin Days in 2018, and we had a great time! The Hochstetler Families are so gracious, patient, and kind. We enjoyed meeting everyone, and attending the various workshops on building log homes; treatment of your log home; the difference between tree species; etc. It was very interesting and then to witness the operation of the mill in real life was pretty neat to witness! The various vendors attending were outstanding as well, as each had their own special niche of what you would love to decorate with and have in your log home. We saw homemade ice cream being made via a John Deere tractor engine, and it was awesome! And the best part of all: to our delight, but not a surprise, the food was some of the best home cooking you will ever eat! Oh my, I cannot get enough of those fry pies! I highly recommend anyone attending who is thinking about building a new log home or maybe getting new ideas for an update to your current log home. You will not be disappointed."

-- Robin Bissantz

**THE  
LOG HOME  
ACADEMY**

# 9 STEPS TO A BETTER DREAM HOME BUILDING EXPERIENCE.

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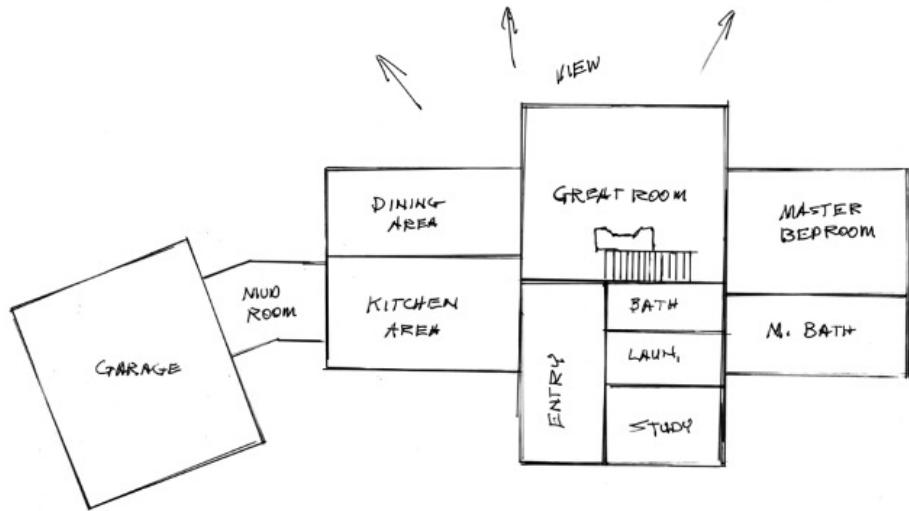
**SEE US AT LOG CABIN DAYS!**

4486 TR 156, Millersburg • Duane Raber 330-231-2473, [pinelane20@gmail.com](mailto:pinelane20@gmail.com)

# Better Homes Design Faster: Part II - By Levi Hochstetler

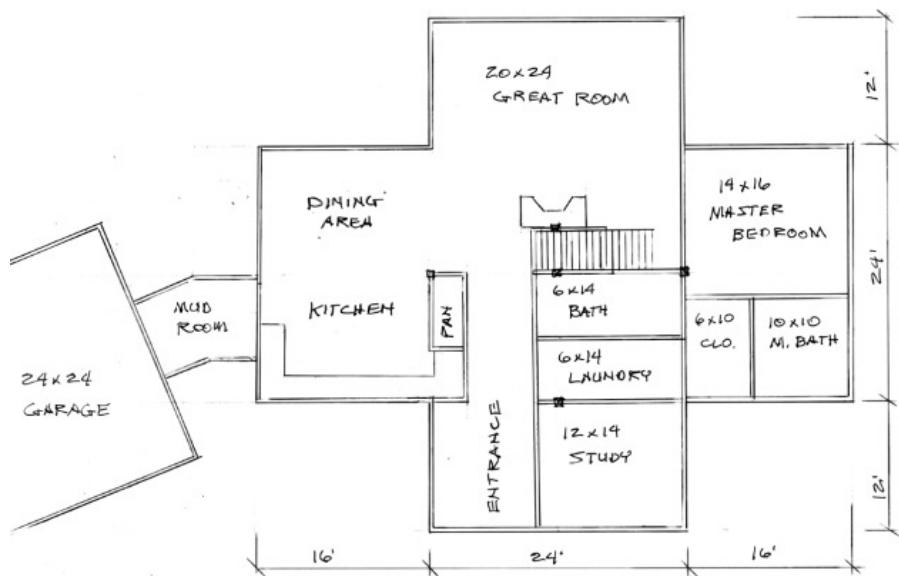
(Continued from Summer 2021 Issue)

**Converting the bubble drawing to a square sketch.** After you're satisfied with the bubble drawing in the field, you take it and make squares for each room instead of blocks, arranged in a similar manner. No need to draw to scale just yet, other than make big squares for larger areas and little squares for smaller areas.



As you do this, the plan will take shape and form rather mysteriously not unlike putting together a puzzle. Remember, it's still only paper drawings and you can sketch, draw, and redraw 100 times for pennies compared to making changes during the building process. Once it's converted to squares you redraw it to scale (printed and scaled pads make this easy) and add stairs, bathrooms, and other secondary rooms.

As you move things around so they flow and fit, you may have to adjust some of the room sizes to accompany each other.



In a log home with a heavy timber exposed roof and loft system you will need to plan on having several posts down the center of the home, and they need to line up with the posts in the basement. Arrange the rooms and posts so they don't interfere with your floor layout.

**Your budget:** Before you get too far into planning your dream, you should, if you haven't already, get pre-qualified at your bank. If you would rather, Farm Credit has an electronic payment calculator at [www.e-farmcredit.com](http://www.e-farmcredit.com) that may be helpful in doing your own preliminary prequalifying. Establishing a realistic budget is a "must do" before you go to your designer. Otherwise, you may end up spinning your tires with

redrawing and prolonging the design process for weeks.

Once it's all together to scale, calculate the square feet of living space. (Don't forget the upstairs.) If it's too large for your budget, then rethink your room size needs and compromise where you can and adjust accordingly. Rooms that get used a lot (kitchen/living areas) leave bigger and more to the size you think you will need. Areas you use less (bedrooms/master bath) consider reducing and modifying more. Other areas, like sunrooms and garages, consider adding later. Get an average, workable, per square cost from your log home manufacturer, such as Hochstetler Log Homes.

Resist the temptation to make the home so large that it stretches your budget to the point where you have to compromise the quality of your home. Or worse yet, give up your dream. When making quality of material decisions, **always compromise on items that can easily be upgraded or replaced down the road, like cabinets, counter-tops, and interior doors, but don't compromise on items more permanent such as wall logs, structural material, and roof insulation.** Think **long-term** and how that decision will affect you for the life of the home.

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

## Cabins and Rustic Furnishings Auction on Saturday, Sept. 18th at Hochstetler Log Homes Selling the following during Log Cabin Days



Actual Products may vary from photos

- **Cabins:** Up to three 12' wide Prebuilt Cabins. Perfect for that weekend getaway or a hunting cabin.
- **Pavilions:** Prebuilt Timber Pavilions. Delivered and erected on your ideal spot, within 50 miles.
- **Furniture:** Rustic Bedroom Sets, Coffee Tables, Chairs, and lots more...
- **Home Decor:** Items that you need to put the finishing touches in your home.

**Location: 552 SR 95, Loudonville, OH 44842**  
**More info or to consign call: 419-368-0005**

★★★ SPECIAL SECTION ★★★

# LOG CABIN DAYS

## September 17 & 18 at Hochstetler Log Homes

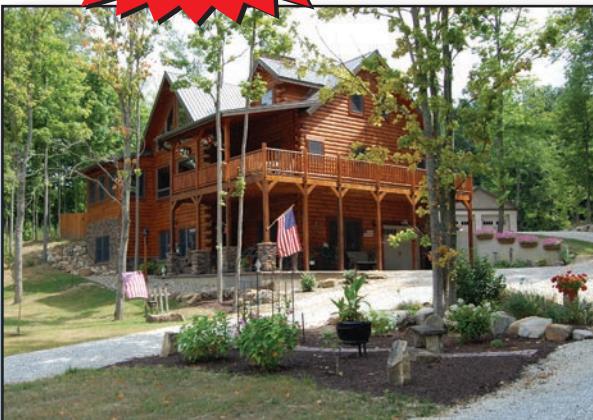
Log Cabin Days Hours: Friday, September 17: 11am-7pm • Saturday, September 18: 9am-5pm

Have you ever dreamed of sipping fresh apple cider with the family gathered around a crackling fireplace inside your very own log home? Perhaps you are one of the lucky few that have already experienced it? Or maybe you are one of those that yearn for the days-gone-by when life was a lot simpler and everything was more relaxed and laid-back? Whichever it may be, Log Cabin Days is for you! Let me invite you to come and join the thousands of other like-minded enthusiasts that travel from as far as California to enjoy several days of fellowship during this event. Log Cabin Days is now an every two year event and 2021 is the year.

As always, the highlight again is the popular self-guided log home auto tour sponsored by Andersen Windows. At this writing, we have 11 private log

homes scheduled to be on the tour, including 3 Custom homes, 2 Sweetwaters, 2 Hudsons, McKay

**SELF-GUIDED LOG HOME TOUR**



44, Fairview, Black Fork and Mt. Laurel. Only two of these homes have been on the tour before. These are in addition to our own furnished models, the McKay and Black Fork. Note: The homes are split up in a West and North route, each one is a 6 hour tour so you won't be able to see all the homes and you will need to pick and choose.

We will be taking a suggested donation of \$20 for the first two people and \$10 for each additional person for the tour. 100% of the proceeds benefit the American Cancer Society. After signing up, you will be given locations of each home. (Sorry, we don't give out the address before the event) These homes are private residences, please wear masks at the owners request and thank them for their generosity in opening up their homes to give you this rare opportunity during this 2-day event. Never before has such a small investment had such a large benefit to your "log home building journey." And, what's more, it's helping out your favorite charity!

We are very excited to have the team at Log Home Academy share their expertise in the "9 Steps to the Good Log Home Workshops", covering these vital topics.

← Two of the homes on the tour. Pick up tour map at Information Booth. →



**Step 1: Budgeting.** It simply can't be overemphasized! Regardless if you are getting financing from a bank or paying out of pocket, you need to sit down and figure it out...Learn more.

**Step 2: Finding the right property.** Consider the vital importance of where you live, how you live, and how it can impact you and your family's future...Learn More

**Step 3: What style of home.** Log homes can be built in different styles with different log and corner types that complement the home...Learn more.

**Step 4: Determining your room and space needs.** Make a room space "wish list", then separate them into a four column priority list...Learn more.

**Step 5: Locating and arranging the home on the property.** It's time to grab your survey and topography map and maybe a few stakes...Learn more.

**Step 6: Converting the bubble drawing to a scale sketch;** Wandering around your property to find that "just right" spot for your dream log home was kind of fun and exciting. Now...Learn more.

**Step 7: Concept Drawings.** First, you will want your designer to draw preliminary plans for you to review...Learn more.

*continued on next page*

# Self-Guided Log Home Tour • Lumberjack Competitions • Log Cabin Works

## Step 8: Preliminary Plans to Final Constructions

**Documents.** Make sure you're totally satisfied that you have found all the bugs in your design...Learn more.

**Step 9: The Construction of your home.** At some point you will need to determine how much you want to be involved in the construction of your home...Learn more.

Additional seminars will cover, log home maintenance and your options in Log Basics 101.

In celebrating our 35th anniversary we are having a sale during Log Cabin Days on our PPG Proluxe wood finishes by offering 35% off suggested retail price. This applies on all PPG Proluxe Wood Finishes in stock while supplies last. We will also offer for sale Conceal caulking and other miscellaneous items.

Exhibitors will be showing off their wares, including cabinets, solid oak furniture, log home furniture, bent hickory rockers, Insulated concrete forms (ICF), windows, and both interior and exterior doors. Along with banks that specialize in log home lending to take care of all your financial questions. A landscaper will fill you in on landscaping. Note; this again could be one of the largest assembly of rustic furniture makers ever assemblies in North America. Hint-- bring your truck!

## NEW FOR 2021. Cabin, Pavilion and Rustic

**Furniture Auction.** There will be up to 3 cabins to bid on along with pavilions, rustic bedroom sets, coffee tables, chairs, home décor, Amish made quilt, and lots more. Bidding for rustic furniture starts Saturday at noon, followed by the cabins and pavilions at 3:00.

The new state of the art SII dry kiln along with the mill can be toured at your leisure. We will operate the mill for 15 minutes on Friday the 17th starting at 12:45 and Saturday the 18th starting at 9:45

and again at 1:45. We will have associates available explaining the operation.

Our demonstration tent will once again have craftsmen demonstrating various 19th century era log cabin-related trades. They include bowl & spoon carver, gun builder, broom maker, potter, and wood carver. You'll also see wool spinning, rug braiding and period furniture makers demonstrating their period wood lathe, jig saw, hand planes and more. Some hands-on activity and interaction with the attendees will be encouraged.

There will also be demonstrations of hand-hewing, hand-peeling, and chainsaw carving, not to mention the blacksmith pounding out unique iron items for your log home. Also, on board is a wood carver – carving one-of-a-kind fireplace mantels.

Also, on-site will be a vintage steam engine-powered shingle mill cutting shingles (just like in the good ole' days!), as well as a sawmill cutting pine logs into timber and dimensional lumber.

Win a prize while trying your hand at being a real lumberjack. Throw the ax and hit the bull's eye, see how "cool" it is cutting logs with a cross cut saw and how "easy" it is to fell a tree with an ax.

There will be plenty of other fun things to watch and do. Perhaps you would like to relive, "Little House on the Prairie" and go on a horse-drawn old-fashion covered wagon ride down through the woods or watch the blacksmith shoe a few horses. Be sure and visit our forestry booth and receive a free bundle of white pine seedlings and don't forget to register to win a free chainsaw carving.

Since log cabin days is a family event we've tried to include lots of activities for kids, too. Make sure

the children get the chance to take a

ride on a pony train or play "gold digger" and sift thru shavings for nickels and candy. They will, no doubt, be fascinated by our small petting zoo with a chance to get "up-close and personal" with the animals like a pony, a calf, puppies, rabbits, and kittens.

Log Cabin Days would not be complete without some good old-fashioned, mouth-watering, finger-lickin' food-and this year is no exception. You'll find delicious barbecue chicken, done to perfection on our large outdoor pit, as well as noodles, potato salad, kettle cooked baked beans and a variety of pies including L.C.D's famous fry pies highlighting the menu. There is also homemade ice cream, fresh-squeezed apple cider, apple butter and kettle-cooked popcorn. Be sure and plan on taking home pastries from the Amish bake sale, highlighted with fresh pies and homemade bread along with locally made Swiss cheese, trail bologna, and fresh produce.

Come early on Saturday morning for the "Early Bird" breakfast, which will be served starting at 7:00 with scrambled eggs and bacon done on an open kettle, real stuffed sausage, pancakes, donuts and coffee or juice.

Proceeds from the sale of refreshments and bake sale will benefit the Mohican Parochial School.

Last, but not least, both our models – the McKay and Black Fork – will be open for tours as well. While the Black Fork is at the Mill where the event is held, a trolley will shuttle people down to the McKay model.

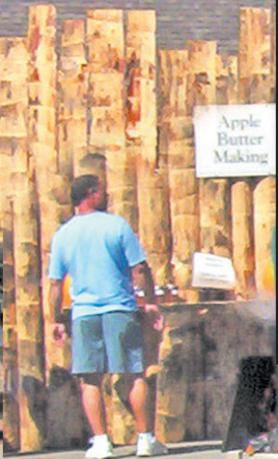
Our goal is to make Log Cabin Days an enjoyable 2-day event that is both educational and beneficial for the whole family. There will be \$5 admission for adults, children 12 & under free. If you prefer you can preregister at hochstetlerloghomes.com. Come early and stay both days. See you there. 



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**FUN &  
EDUCATIONAL**



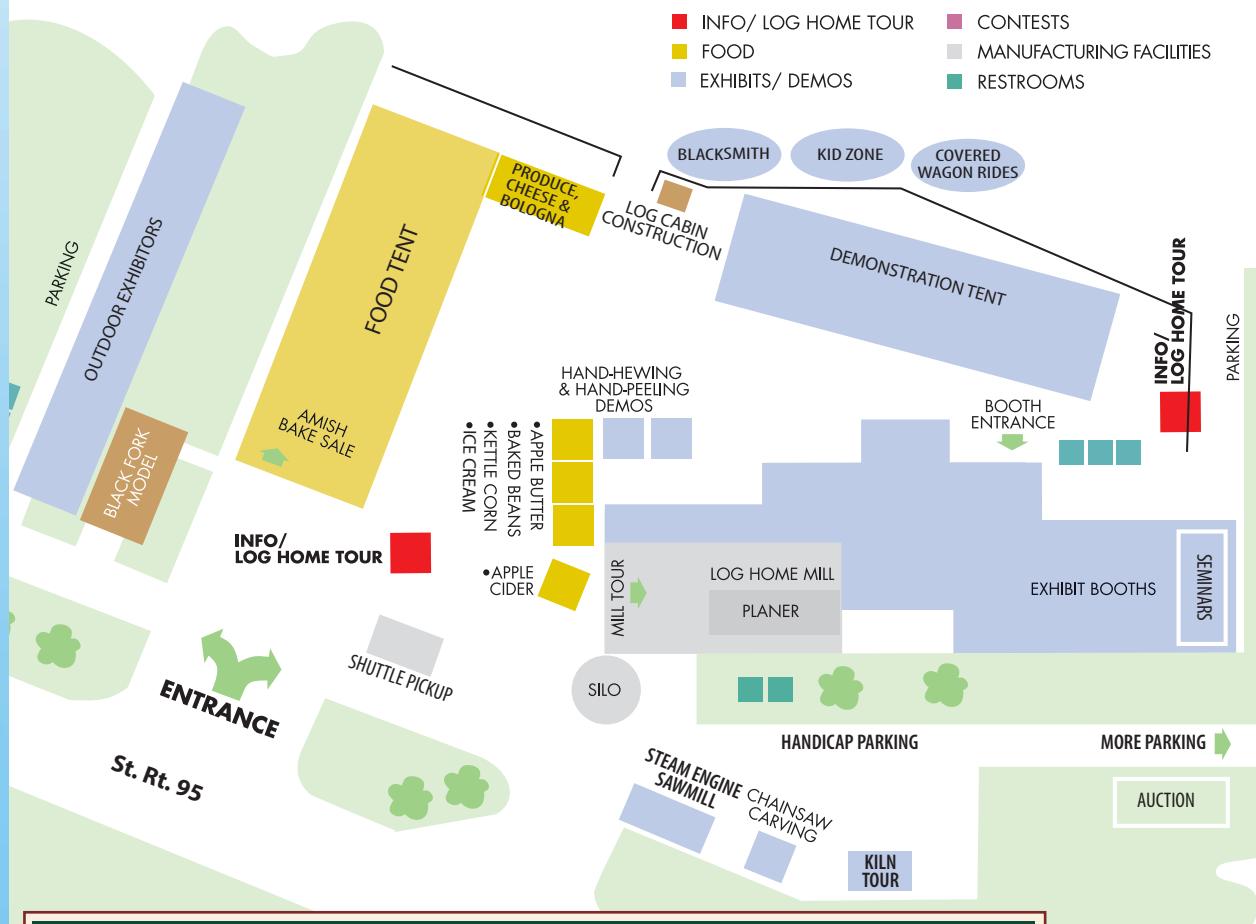
## WORKSHOPS & SEMINARS

**FRIDAY**  
SEPT. 17

**SATURDAY**  
SEPT. 18

11:00	Log Basics
12:00	Budgeting & Finding Property
1:00	Style of Home & Room Spacing
2:00	Arranging the Home & Bubble Drawings
3:00	Concept Drawings to Construction Documents
4:00	Construction of Your Home
4:30	Log Home Maintenance

9:00	Log Basics
10:00	Budgeting & Finding Property
11:00	Style of Home & Room Spacing
12:00	Arranging the Home & Bubble Drawings
1:00	Concept Drawings to Construction Documents
2:00	Construction of Your Home
2:30	Log Home Maintenance



### CABINS, PAVILIONS AND RUSTIC FURNITURE AUCTION

Starting with rustic furniture at noon on Saturday  
Cabins and Pavilions sell at 3:00 PM



Up to three pre-built cabins, pavilions, rustic furniture and home decor items to be sold on Saturday in a live auction during Log Cabin Days.

### Partial Exhibitor List

- AlPaca Petes – Rugs
- Amvic – ICF Concrete Forms
- Andersen Windows – Exterior Windows & Doors
- Coalway – Fireplaces and Stoves
- Colonial Homestead – Primitive Tool Demo
- Consumers National Bank – Log Home Lender
- Custom Wood Creations - Rustic Furniture
- Cutco – Knives
- Donny Hochstetler – Chain Saw Carving
- Eicher Woodworking – Custom Cabinets
- Grandpa's Antiques – Antiques
- Hillside Gazebos – Rustic Furniture
- HLH Forestry – Free Pine Seedlings
- Hoover Pump Works – Pumps
- Jamison Well Drilling – Well Drilling
- JH Landscaping – Landscaping
- Lakeland Log Homes – Cabin Builder
- McElroy Metal – Roofing Products
- Millers Rustic Furniture – Rustic Furniture
- Mohican Hardware – Tools & Home Appliances
- Mohican Valley Fence – Fencing
- MWCD – Cabin Rentals
- OHV Flooring – Flooring
- Palmer Donovan – Therma-Tru Exterior Doors
- Pine Lane Staining – Stain Applicator
- Pittsburg Paints – Exterior & Interior Stains
- Provia Stone – Manufactured Stone
- Ron Obrecht – Scroll Saw Demo
- Rural 1st. - Log Home Lender
- Schlabach Engine – Lawn Mowers
- Stallion Doors – Interior Doors
- Stutzman Farms – Organic Grains
- The Cabin Store – Rustic Cabin Décor

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### EVENT INFORMATION:

Located 5 miles north of Loudonville and 1/2 mile east of the St. Rt. 95 & 60 intersection at 552 St. Rt. 95

**Hours:** Friday, September 17, 11am - 7pm

Saturday, September 18, 9am - 5pm

Questions, call 800-368-1015 or 419-368-0004.

Admission: \$5.00



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*On the Square in Kidron, OH • Open every day except Sunday*

# A Cracker Barrel Tang

by Nathan Hochstetler



- Style Life Photography

*A*

Although it can be said every home has a personality - just like people - some homes are more inviting and welcoming than others. That is certainly the case with the home of Tim and Deb Werner. From the time you cross the Welcome Mat 'til the time you reluctantly say, "Good Bye", you feel warm and comfortable.

The Werner's always had a log home on their "bucket list" going back to when they were dating. Tim's brother and sister both owned a log home and their warm and homey feeling was captivating. They did come closer to their dream when a friend showed them a property just outside of Greensburg, Pennsylvania. It broke Debbie's heart when they were outbid by \$100; the property was exactly what they were looking for and only over the hill from their daughter. She told her husband, "God wants us there and I am going to claim the property!" A few minutes later the phone rang with the realtor on the line asking if they are still interested, that the other buyer withdrew. The Werner's got their slice of Heaven after all!

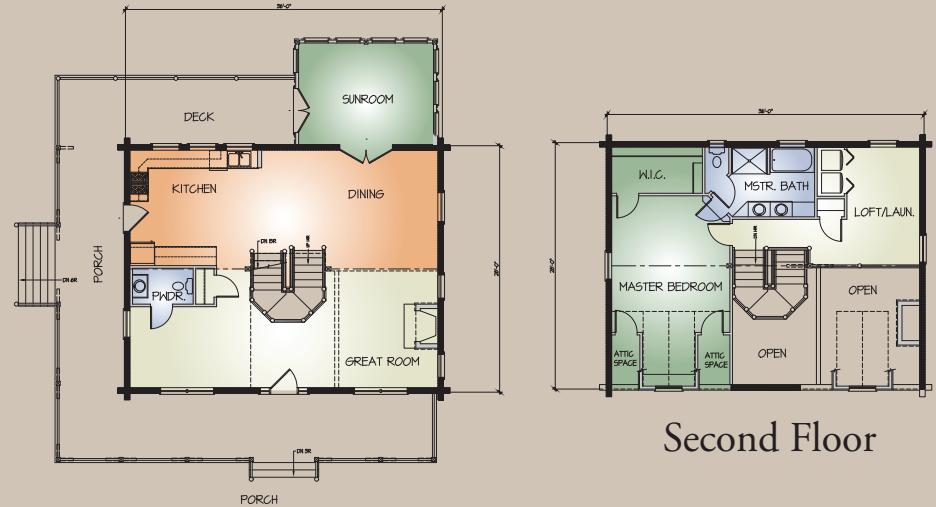


They researched over six different log home companies and even made a \$2000 deposit with one of them, but after stumbling on a Hochstetler Log Home construction site they were instantaneously impressed. And, after meeting them in person at the Columbus Log & Timber show they were certain it was the company for them. If asked, Why Hochstetler?, Tim says, "You just felt like family, that close knit feeling, and they offered the true heavy post and beam roof."

The U-shaped staircase and the open-concept great room of the Woodlawn design intrigued them. And, with the help of the team at Hochstetler and a local Amish craftsman Jake Detweiler, they were able to customize the design to fit their lifestyle. Removing the bedroom from the main floor enabled them to enlarge the kitchen. It also added ample space for their large table to fit 20 people in the dining area. The sunroom off the dining area offers an outstanding backyard view and is a favorite place to relax, enjoy a cup of coffee and watch TV. The basement is finished out with 2 bedrooms and a seating area to make room when the married children and grandkids come over. But now the grandkids always prefer to sleep upstairs in the loft with them, usually starting the night out in the "Jake Bed", a built-in bed at the window Jake the builder made especially for them. First one will crawl in with Tim and Debbie and a little later another one with them crowding together, but when the third one joins, Tim is pushed out to find a spot elsewhere.

Construction was started in August of 2017, Debbie got on the good side of the crew, cooking lunch for them every Friday and each time she stopped by to watch the progress she would bring them a treat. The payoff was, she didn't have to pry them too hard when making changes to her home. They moved in their new home in February of 2018, on the day of Debbie's birthday they woke up for the first time in their Dream Log Home.

Debbie's love for quarter horses is evident in her collection, numbering over 80 colorful porcelain and cast horses, each one named and numbered, and displayed in an old glass cabinet. Throughout the home there is an array of family heirlooms-all poignant reminders of cherished memories. A friend's comment, "This looks like we are at Cracker Barrel" Their log home truly has that same welcoming feel, "Come on In!" 



Second Floor

First Floor



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

# CABIN FEVER

## Race Across America”

by Mark Dinkins

It's June 19, and I'm about to embark on a once-in-a-lifetime bicycle race across America with my teammates which included David, Doug and Judy. This fund-raising event sponsored by our club, Team ENSO, was created to support cancer research and help veterans and their families. My mother and aunt were cancer victims and my wife, Susan, is a cancer survivor. Another member of our team had also been touched by this dreadful disease.

Our journey would start in the town of Oceanside, about 15 miles south of San Diego, and end in Annapolis, Maryland ... a total of over 3000 miles! That morning my mind was racing with thoughts of the unexpected: What will the weather be like, What will be the most challenging part of the trip, the safety concerns, and finally, Will we make it?

For starters, the weather was unseasonably hot ... 116 degrees! And, although all four of us were experienced riders, two of us were over 50, including myself. The first two days would be daunting since we would be pedaling across the desert in the unbearable heat. One rider would be sandwiched between the lead van showing the way, and another van following.

I started my leg at 12:21 pm and soon noticed how daunting this was going to be. After a few hours it felt like a hot iron was pressed against my back. Even the moisture-wicking jersey didn't help. Sweat dripped into my eyes as I continued to brush it from my forehead. I was miserable and wondered if I had made a mistake just volunteering for this. With headphones on, I called back to the van, "I can only go 20 minutes, next rider up." It was that way for over 100 miles. The third day was a little better since we were approaching the foothills of the Rockies and the temperature had dropped slightly. Every rider was finally able to average about 100 miles per shift ... our goal for the trip.

As I was approaching the mountain range in Colorado one evening I saw an animal 20' ahead at the side of the road. It looked like a cat but as I got closer I saw it was a bobcat and he didn't seem to want to move. I respected his space and slipped over to the other lane while he looked on, probably snickering. Another rider had experienced a bobcat also, plus a brown bear. We didn't carry any bear spray or firearms, so he must have been a little nervous. Doug had the most harrowing experience though, as he was descending a mountain at 58 mph and a large mule deer suddenly dashed in front of him, barely missing him and avoiding a disaster.

Mile after mile we traveled with only an occasional change-of-rider break. It was basically non-stop. We each slept, or at least tried to, for a couple hours each day in the RV.

As we finally approached Annapolis at 11:00 am, June 26, I sensed we had made it ... in 6 days, 20 hours, 31 minutes! The skyscrapers and sounds of the city were like welcome signs. It was a team effort and one I'm particularly proud to be a part of. As legendary coach, Woody Hayes, once said, "Pay forward," and I think our 75K contribution to three meaningful and deserving charities will help. 

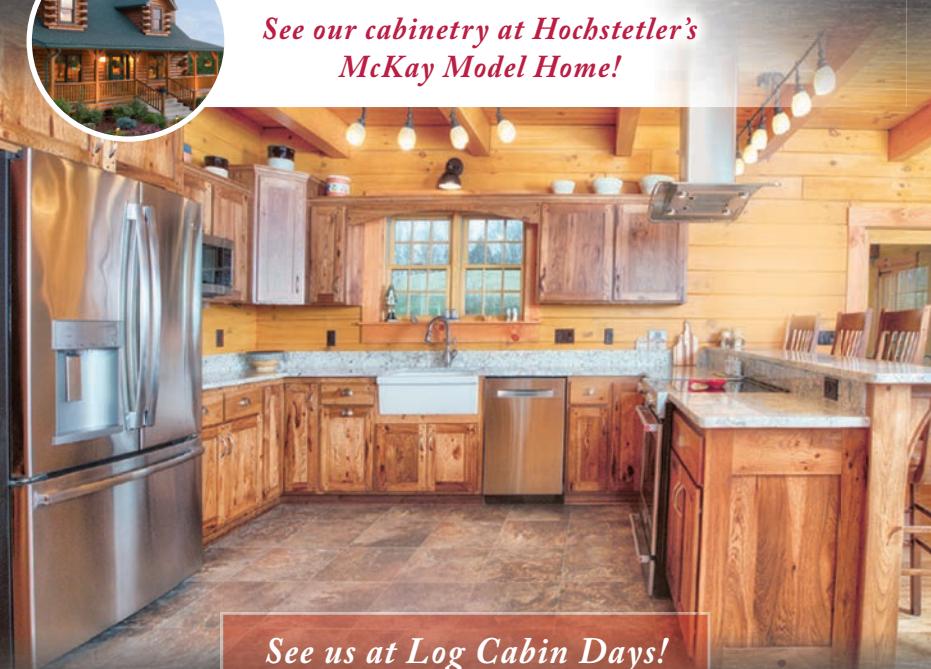


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