



Promoting The Simple Life

Fall 2024

Log Home Life

VIEW FROM THE MILL

By Levi Hochstetler

We continue to give away and plant white pine seedlings. Several years ago we came up with a tree planting program. If you own several acres that you would like to plant into trees and are within 50 miles of our shop we give you the seedlings free of charge with only one string attached: you plant them. If you're more than 50 miles away you can still buy the seedlings through us in order to get a volume discount. We have a tree planter that we rent out for a nominal cost. It takes about two hours to plant one acre of about 700 trees. Naturally our resources are limited. Our minimum goal is to replace the trees we use in manufacturing log homes. We have already satisfied our 2025 goal. We still have a few opening for 2026. So far we have either planted or given away over 130,000 seedlings. If every tree would grow to maturity that would be enough to build 1500 log homes! Contact Steven at extension 209 for more information.

One more page on the calendar and we will be in September, the month of Log Cabin Days. Just in time to give everyone a short furlough from all the political commotion. One little Amish boy spoke for us all when he innocently declared, "I hope the end of the world won't come before Log Cabin Days!"

– Levi

PS: Be sure and pick up your packet of free white pine seedlings at our forestry booth during LCD's.

Come Visit Us!

Hochstetler Log Homes, LTD

552 St. Rt. 95, Loudonville, OH

800-368-1015

See our special section inside for more information and a schedule of events.

Log Cabin Days is slated for Friday, September 13 (10-6) & Saturday, September 14 (9-5) at Hochstetler Log Homes, 552 SR 95, Loudonville, Ohio.

- 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 & Seminars
- Homesteading: Learn how to have your own hobby farm, from gardening to raising chickens
- Hand-Peeling & Hand-Hewing Demos
- Petting Zoo

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



Braving the Storm

Hochstetler Log Home offers protection during a tornado in upstate New York

— by Janice Weiser

When you design and build a log home in the foothills of New York's Adirondack mountains, you think about heat sources, frost levels and snow loads, but tornados just aren't top of mind.

Unfortunately, on July 16, an EF 1 tornado struck Jack Clark's new Hochstetler log home near the Great Sacandaga Lake. Jack's son Paul, his daughter-in-law Evyn and their bulldog Letty, who were in the home at the time were able to shelter safely in the basement of the house that had just been completed in April. They heard loud bangs and cracks as 115-mile-per-hour winds uprooted and broke off trees that fell or were thrown onto the cabin.

continued on page 2

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Loudonville, OH 44842

Hochstetler Log Homes, LTD

552 State Route 95

Eagle Point

1,871 sq. ft.
3 BR / 2-1/2 BA



Eagle Point is a beautifully designed home with all the amenities in a smaller footprint. The large glass windows in the angled prow brings in the outdoors and captures the view from the great-room. Master suite is on the main-floor with a double sink in the bathroom and a large walk-in closet. Upstairs are two additional bedrooms and full bath. Laundry is in the mudroom, leading to the 2-car garage. Live a life more simple, build the Eagle Point.

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

**All our plans can be modified to fit your lifestyle.
Call 800-368-1015 to get your new log home started.**



Braving the Storm (cont'd. from page 1)

"They had a warning that a bad storm was coming," Jack says. "It lasted about five minutes."

National Weather Service confirmed seven tornadoes in the Adirondacks that day, possibly resulting from the remnants of Hurricane Beryl.

Surveying the Damage

In the aftermath, Jack and his fellow homeowners discovered damage that leapfrogged around the area. Trees had penetrated the roof of his log home in several areas, torn window screens, crushed one dormer and destroyed the exterior heat pump unit.

Jack owns a cottage across the street from the cabin on the lakefront. "That property was virtually untouched," he says. Meanwhile, a neighbor's boat and dock were wrenched out of the water and dropped on a neighbor's car.



Help on the Way

Downed trees and wires knocked out power to the log home. The new 1,000-gallon gas generator kicked on but only ran for about an hour before failing, leaving Jack's son and daughter-in-law without electricity or a way to pump water from the well. They hiked down the road, dodging downed power lines, to a spot where Jack could retrieve them.

Almost immediately, Jack was able to secure a large crew with heavy equipment to begin clearing trees. Robert Mack, who had just been on the property to stack the home's logs during construction returned to the site to make a list of materials needed to rebuild. The Hochstetler team is now working on supplying roof shingles, tongue-and-groove and other replacement materials. Through it all, the home's structural logs remained intact.

Weather Resistance

Steve Lykins, an engineer at Hochstetler Log Homes wasn't surprised that in general, the Clarks' home fared well. "In the 15 years I've been at Hochstetlers, this is the third home that's been hit by a derecho or a tornado," he says. "In every instance, the damage to the roof has been the same, but I've never seen timbers broken." Log walls, he estimates, should be able to withstand head-on winds of 200 miles per hour. "Jack's house didn't go anywhere, and that's our goal. Our goal in design is to protect life and safety." Overall, Steve says, log homes have proven to be resistant to fire, wind and hail.

It was fortunate, Jack says, that the gutters hadn't been installed yet and they hadn't landscaped the log home. Otherwise, all of that would have been destroyed.

Like many people who own a lake house, Jack's family enjoys watching storms roll in across the water. "This," he says, "was not one of those thunderstorms that you watch and enjoy."



CABIN AND RUSTIC FURNISHINGS AUCTION

Friday, September 13th | Auction starting @ 3:00 PM



Actual products may vary from photos.

Items selling at Live Auction during Log Cabin Days:

Cabins: Up to 3 Pre-built 12' wide Cabins. Perfect for that weekend getaway, rental, office space, or hunting cabin. Includes delivery within 50 miles. Will be ready to drop on your site and enjoy right away.

Pavilions: Up to 3 Pre-built Timber Pavilions. If you are wanting to create the ultimate outdoor oasis, look no further! Sizes include a 16x20, 12x16, and 12x12. Includes metal roof, delivery and erection on your ideal spot, within 50 miles.

Gazebo: 10x10 Cedar Log Gazebo with 4' swing

Rustic Furniture: Log Bedroom Sets, Cedar Log Bunk Beds, Cedar Log Bed Frames, Dining Tables, Chairs, Coffee Tables, Bar Tables, Bar Stools, Whiskey Barrel Tables, End Tables, Live Edge Slabs, Hickory Rockers, Futons, Bookshelves, Child's Rocker, and much-much more. These pieces will be made from variety species of wood, Hickory, Aspen, Reclaimed Barn Wood, Pine, and Sassafras. If you are needing to furnish a cabin or want rustic furniture in your home, this will be the place to buy. We are expecting some very unique pieces that cannot be duplicated.

Home Decor: Hall Trees, Rustic Coat Hangers, Charcuterie Boards, Hammers, Axes, and Welcome signs. Plus, lots more misc. items that you need to put the finishing touches in your home.

Outdoor Furniture: A-Frame Swings, Porch Swings, Park Benches, Single and Double Adirondack Chairs, Child's Adirondack chair, Picnic Tables, Arbors, Gliders, and more.

The Cabin and Rustic Furnishings auction is held in conjunction with Log Cabin Days. A family friendly event that all ages will enjoy. This is to be one of the largest rustic furniture auctions in North America. Plan on buying, we will have something you will like! Bring your family and friends and enjoy your day with the many activities going on.

Auction Terms & Conditions: Cash or check with proper ID. Settlement due day of sale.

\$5 admission fee for event entry.

Location: Hochstetler Log Homes | 552 SR 95 Loudonville, OH

For more info call: 419.368.0004



Lavern Yoder
REALTOR/AUCTIONEER
330.204.0696

Auction Coordinator:

Zach Troyer
REALTOR
740.502.0394

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4 • Call 800.368.1015 to order back issues or for the complete article.

SELLING AT THE CABIN AND RUSTIC FURNISHINGS AUCTION

Friday, September 13th | Selling @ 6:00 PM



This rustic Hickory kitchen will be available to purchase at the Log Cabin Days Auction this year.
It will be on display at Eicher Woodworking LLC's booth.

For more information on the kitchen contact: Eicher Woodworking 419.994.1098

Auction Terms and Conditions: Cash or check with proper ID. Settlement due day of sale.

Auction Location: Hochstetler Log Homes | 552 SR 95 Loudonville, OH

For more info call: 419.368.0004



Lavern Yoder
REALTOR/AUCTIONEER
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Auction Coordinator:
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LOG HOME TOUR

American Cancer Society would like to thank the hosts of the 2024 Log Cabin Days car tour for opening their doors to make the home tour possible. This is one of the largest fund-raisers we do and we can't thank you enough.

These homes will be available for tour during Log Cabin Days. You will be able to converse with the homeowners on how their building experience was, what they would do differently, and discover the casual, relaxing lifestyle that characterizes log home living. The \$25 per person donation goes to the American Cancer Society. You must register at the information booth at Log Cabin Days to receive the locations of these homes.



Black Fork Model



John Young



McKay Model



Ray & Sandy Kowatch



Edwin and Ona Hochstetler



Rick and Kandy Mullins



Teton Spec Home



Old Log Homestead

★★★ SPECIAL SECTION ★★★

LOG CABIN DAYS

September 13 & 14 at Hochstetler Log Homes

Log Cabin Days Hours: Friday, September 13: 10am-6pm • Saturday, September 14: 9am-5pm

H ave you ever dreamed of spending time with family and friends in your own beautiful log home? Perhaps you are one of the lucky few that already get to enjoy the log home lifestyle? Or maybe you yearn for days-gone-by when life was a lot simpler? Whichever it may be, Log Cabin Days is for you! Join in the Family Friendly Fun with activities everyone will enjoy.

New for 2024 is the Homesteading tent.

Learn how to have your own hobby farm. Participate in seminars and talk with vendors on gardening, fruit trees, bee keeping, animal care and much more.

The highlight is the self-guided **log home auto tour** sponsored by Andersen Windows. We have 6 log homes scheduled to be on the tour. Allow at least 6 hours to do the complete tour.

SELF-GUIDED
LOG HOME TOUR



A suggested donation of \$25 per person for the tour goes to the American Cancer Society. Registration must be made at the event entry pavilion. The homes are private residences; please thank the owners for their generosity in opening up their homes to give you this rare opportunity.

The team at **Log Home Academy** will share their expertise on Friday in the “9 Steps to the Good Log Home Workshops” covering these vital topics. You can pick and choose which ones you want. See the times on the Workshop & Seminar section.

- **Financing**
- **Finding Property**
- **Choosing Your Home Style & Size**
- **Construction Process**
- **Log Home Care**
- **Interior Decorating & Design**
- **Why Use Wood**
- **Roundtable with Log Home Owners**
- **Log & Timber Home Living**
- **Do's and Don'ts of Your Own Rental Cabins**

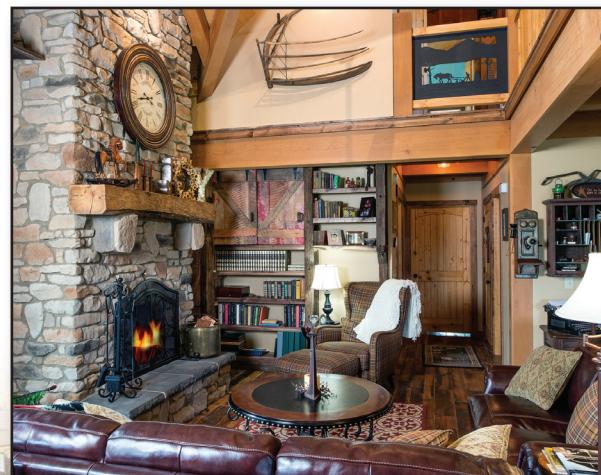
← Two of the homes on the tour. Pick up tour map at Information Booth. →

Seminars are sponsored by Log & Timber Home Living.

Be sure to pick up your log home care supplies! During Log Cabin Days we are having a **sale of 15% off**. This applies on all PPG Proluxe Wood Finishes, caulking, bug repellent and brushes in stock, while supplies last. 5% off all Log Building material T&G, Railing, Log Siding and fasteners.

Exhibitors will be showing off their wares, including, cabinets, solid oak furniture, log home furniture, bent hickory rockers, windows, and both interior and exterior doors. This could be the largest assembly of rustic furniture makers in North America, be sure to bring your truck to take home all your new treasures! Builders will be on hand to answer all your construction questions, along with banks that specialize in log home lending.

*continued
on next page ▶*



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

Auction will be held on Friday. **Bidding for rustic furniture starts at 3 PM** and is one of the largest rustic furniture and décor auctions offering bedroom sets, coffee tables, home décor, Amish made quilts, and lots more, including some very unique pieces that can't be duplicated. Bring your truck! **Bidding for up to 3 cabins and 4 pavilions will begin on Friday, 5:00 PM.**

The 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 at 11:45 and 2:45, as well as Saturday at 9:45 and again at 1:45.

Demonstration area 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.

On site will be **vintage steam engines** powering a shingle mill and sawmill (just like in the good ole' days!).

Win a prize while trying your hand at being a 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.

Relive "Little House on the Prairie" and go on a horse drawn **covered wagon ride** down through

the woods or watch the black smith shoe a few horses. Be sure to go on the forestry tour 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 kid activities too. Make sure they take a ride on the pony train, run the maze thru the woods, play "gold digger" and sift thru shavings for nickels and candy. They will, no doubt, be fascinated by the petting zoo with a chance to get "up close" with animals like a pony, a calf, puppies, rabbits, and kittens.

Log Cabin Days would not be complete without some good old-fashioned, **finger-lickin' food**. You have to try out the Gourmet Cabin Burger! You'll also find delicious barbecue chicken, done to perfection on our large outdoor fire pit, as well as noodles, kettle-cooked baked beans and a variety of pies including L.C.D's famous fry pies. There is also homemade ice cream, fresh-squeezed apple cider, apple butter and kettle-cooked popcorn. Be sure and take home pastries from the Amish bake sale, highlighted with fresh pies and homemade bread.

Come early on Saturday for the **"Early Bird" breakfast**, which will be served from 7:00-10 am with scrambled eggs and bacon, real stuffed sausage, pancakes, donuts and coffee or juice.

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

Log Cabin Days is 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 have additional questions call 800-368-1015. Come early and stay both days.

Partial Exhibitor List

- **1st. Federal** – Lending
- **Andersen Windows** – Windows
- **Brandywine Construction** – Log Home Staining
- **Bucket List** – Bucket Painting
- **Calico Creation** – Hand Dip Candles
- **Cedar Creek Cabins** – Log Home Builder
- **Charm Gifts** – Décor & Herbs
- **Culpeper** – Wood Preservers
- **Cutco** – Knives
- **Donny Hostetler** – Chainsaw Carving
- **Eicher Woodworking** – Custom Cabinets
- **Erb's Hickory Wood Products** – Hickory Rockers
- **Eurotec** – Log Screws
- **Hillside Gazebos** – Rustic Furniture
- **Hochstetler Timbers** – Free Pine Seedlings
- **Jamison Well Drilling** – Well Drilling
- **Lakeland Log Homes** – Log Home Builder
- **Living On The Edge** – Live Edge Furniture
- **Log Home Living** – Log Home Living Magazine
- **Luxecrete** – Concrete Countertop
- **Maysville Furniture Showcase** – Furniture
- **McElroy** – Metal
- **MH3** – Solar
- **Millers Rustic** – Rustic Furniture
- **Mohican Construction** – Log Home Staining
- **Mohican Valley Fence** – Fencing
- **Natures Herbs** – Herbs
- **Noble Cabins & Creations** – Prebuilt Cabins
- **Ohio Valley Flooring** – Hartco Flooring
- **Palmer Donavin** – Exterior Doors
- **Peabody Landscape** – Landscaping
- **Pine Lane Staining** – Log Home Staining
- **PPG** – Stain
- **Provia** – Veneer Stone
- **R.W. Leather** – Leather Billfolds
- **Rural 1st** – Lender
- **Rustic Creations** – Rustic Furniture
- **Rustic Home Accents** – Rustic Furniture
- **Seals Outdoor Services**
- **Schlabach Engine** – Lawn Equipment
- **Stallion Door** – Interior Doors
- **The Cabin Store** – Rustic Furniture & Décor
- **Woodland Rose Log Homes** – Log Home Builder

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

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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

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www.MohicanStateParkLodge.com

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WORKSHOPS & SEMINARS

FRIDAY – SEPTEMBER 13

- 10:00** Log Basics 101
- 11:00** Financing
- 11:30** Finding Property
- 12:00** Choosing Your Home Style & Size
- 1:00** Arranging Your Home on the Property and Designing the Floor Plan
- 2:00** Designing the Right Home for You
- 3:00** Construction Process
- 3:30** Log Home Care

SATURDAY – SEPTEMBER 14

- 9:00** Interior Decorating and Design
- 10:00** Financing
- 11:00** Why Use Wood in Your Home
- 12:00** Roundtable with Log Home Owners
- 1:00** Keynote by Log & Timber Home Living/Dan Mitchel
- 2:00** Do's and Don'ts of Your Own Rental Cabins
- 2:30** Log Home Care

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 The Cabin Store • Premier Metals • Living on the Edge

Come to Log Cabin Days prepared to buy!

If you are looking to furnish your home
 or need to restain, you will find all you need here.
 Bring your truck and trailer!



Up to 40 Vendors will have a booth setup, from builders to cabinets to home decor, we've got it. On Friday, Cabins and Rustic Furnishings will be auctioned off.

Schedule of Events

	Friday Sept. 13th	Saturday Sept. 14th
Food	10 am–6 pm	10 am–5 pm
Breakfast		7 am–10 am
Seminars	10 am–4 pm	9 am–3 pm
Exhibit Booth	10 am–6 pm	9 am–5pm
Demonstration Tent	10am–6pm	9 am–5 pm
Cabin Raising	10 am–6 pm	9 am–5 pm
Furniture Auction		3 pm–8 pm
Cabin Auction	5:00 pm	
Pavilion Auction	5:00 pm	
Kid Zone	10 am–6 pm	9 am–5 pm
Mill Tour	10 am–6 pm	9 am–5 pm
Dry Kiln Tour	10 am–6 pm	9 am–5 pm
Log Home Tour	10 am–6 pm	9 am–5 pm
Shuttle to McKay Model	10 am–6 pm	9 am–5 pm
Covered Wagon Rides	10 am–6 pm	9 am–5 pm
Steam Engines	10 am–6 pm	9 am–5 pm
Bake Sale	10 am–6 pm	9 am–5 pm
Hay Ride Forestry Tour	2:00 pm	2:00 pm

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, Loudonville, OH 44842

Hours: Friday, September 13, 10am - 6pm
 Saturday, September 14, 9am - 5pm
 Early Bird Breakfast Sat. 7am -10am

Questions, call 800-368-1015

Admission: \$5.00



Keynote Speaker Dan Mitchell

We are honored to have **Dan Mitchell** as our keynote speaker at Log Cabin Days.

Dan is the owner and president of Eagle CDI, Inc. based out of Seymour, TN and is currently the vice President of the Tennessee Home Builder Association (THBA). He speaks all over the country and is the teacher and educator for the National Log and Timber University. Dan's credentials are too long to list but here are a few:

- Educator for the Log and Timber Council
- Past National Log Home Builder of the Year
- NAHB National Director
- HBAT Chairman of Government Affairs
- NAHB Area 7 Chairman
- Several Builder of the Year Awards
- He is Inducted into the Tennessee Hall of Fame Builders Association

Please welcome our Honored guest with your attendance at his Keynote address at 1:00 P.M. on Saturday!!!



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Living Lodge in Pennsylvania

*Mountain home inspired
by ski resorts welcomes
friends and family*

by Janice Weiser

- Photography by Style Life Photography

B

ear Creek Lodge, the log home John and Cheri Sloane built in Stahlstown, Pennsylvania, got its name from a serendipitous bear encounter and its style from rustic lodges in the region.

The lodge style came first. The Sloanes, who had dreamed for years of a log home, often vacationed in this part of Pennsylvania, spending time at local resorts in both the summer and winter. "We wanted the home to feel like a resort; like you were at a vacation destination," John says.

With that vision in mind, they needed to find land. They met a real estate agent at a log home show in the area who gave them directions to an 11-acre lot for sale. "We drove to it and it was exactly what we were looking for," John recalls. The wooded site featured ponds, a stream and plenty of space for their family and friends to get that resort feeling.

From Dream to Reality

The Sloanes met Hochstetler Log Homes at the same show. "We went out to Hochstetler to look at plans. They were so friendly, nice and accommodating. It felt like a collaboration," John says. "There was never any doubt that was who we'd work with."

They brought designer Steve Hochstetler blueprint ideas and magazine photos, and the couple discussed with him what they wanted and didn't want. "He sent us a plan that was just about perfect right off the bat."

The home's lodge style starts right at the front door, which is protected by a porte cochere reminiscent of the grand entrances to park lodges. Interior beams and large, 8-by-12-inch square logs with bands of chinking and hand-hewn texture add to the rustic look. "We liked the feel of how heavy and large the logs were," John says.

Like every iconic mountain lodge, the Sloanes' home is anchored by an attention-grabbing stone fireplace. "We wanted to make sure to have as big a fireplace and as big a great room as we could get." Steve's plan for the 3,000-square-foot main floor minimized hallways and



emphasized the open and spacious kitchen, dining room and great room area.

The main floor also includes three bedrooms: The primary suite, a bedroom for their animal-loving daughter and one for their son with a loft that has a secret entrance.

Room for All the Fun

The great room and kitchen may be Cheri's favorite places in the house, but she and John outfitted the lower level for active entertaining. A family room with a fireplace on that level offers comfortable seating. There's also a home theater, kitchen, bar and a mudroom that doubles as a gym. The kids and their friends are never bored with a fully outfitted arcade with shuffleboard, air hockey and video games.

A guest bedroom is also located on this level, along with a hockey-themed bunkroom that sleeps nine. "My son plays and we knew we'd be entertaining hockey kids," John says.

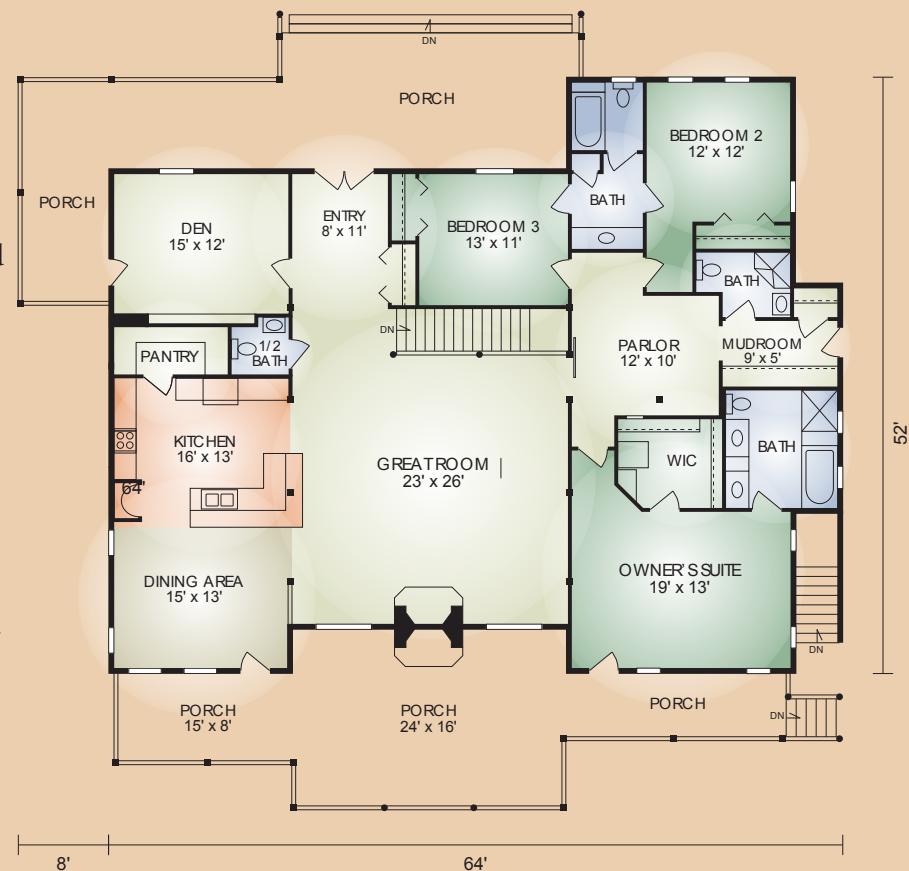
The Great Outdoors

"There are a ton of different places to sit outside," John says. Decks, a gazebo and porches all have a different feel: The big deck on the back of the home is a favorite for watching the sun set behind the mountains.

One of the outbuildings, which resembles a barn, accommodates a large indoor pool. "It's log siding on the outside," John says, "and inside it has steel panels that are water resistant." If the weather's good, the pond is swimmable, too. Next to the pond, John and his dad built a pavilion from leftover timbers. The pond's dock is a favorite spot for John. "I like to sit on the dock, have a fire and fish next to the fire while looking at the cabin."

About That Bear

The story of the Bear Creek Lodge goes like this: There's a creek on the property and plenty of bear activity in the area. Knowing this, John decided during one of their early stays on the property to stash their bags of garbage in his pickup truck. To his surprise, he later discovered a bear sitting in the bed of his truck, feasting on whatever tasty morsels he could find in the trash. Soon after, the Sloanes were in a local gift store and came across a sign that read Bear Creek Lodge. It seemed meant to be and their new resort-style home had its official name. 



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

CABIN FEVER

My Second Home - by Bill Dinkins

As my fishing buddy and I drove north on Rt. 75 toward our destination in Canada, it suddenly occurred to me that this might be my last visit to "my second home."

When I was a youngster growing up on the south side of Akron, it always seemed like a dream to go on a fishing trip there. I read and saw photos of Northern Pike and Muskies nearly as tall as I was and was fascinated by the stories in *Field & Stream* and *Sports Afield*. Authors like Ted Trueblood and Jason Lucas made those stories "come alive." But it wasn't until I saw the huge pike that some men in our neighborhood brought back from Canada that I knew someday, somehow, I had to go there.

My first trip was as a member of the Boy Scouts when we went to Crow Lake, Ontario, and stayed in a small log cabin. One of the scouts discovered we could catch pike by trolling a spinnerbait over the weeds where they were hiding. Years later, when I started college, a fraternity brother and I would make an annual trip to an island on Lake Kapiskong, in northern Ontario. Dave would bring his 9.9 Johnson motor, and we would rent an old wooden boat and off we'd go to a deserted island where we'd camp and fish and soak up the beauty of the great outdoors. The lake had mostly walleye and large pike. One day, as we were anchored, I set the hook on what I thought was a nice walleye. It tugged, straight down as walleyes do, and my rod doubled over the side of the boat. "Get the net!" I shouted, and Dave quickly grabbed it. A minute later it surfaced, but not what I expected. It was a trophy all right...a trophy sucker!

This year, another fishing buddy and I decided to go to an area I'd never been to, but had heard about: the French River. It is well known for producing a great variety of fish — walleye, northern pike, smallmouth and largemouth bass, plus huge muskies (a record 69-lb-er was caught in adjoining Georgian Bay years ago). We stayed at an old fishing camp on the nearby Pickerel River, hoping to catch a large muskie or pike. My buddy, Mike, fished mostly for pike and muskie while I cast to the shoreline for bass. He caught a few small pike, "hammerhandles," in weeds over deeper water and I caught some nice bass probing the rocky shoreline. Typically, you use wire leaders when fishing for pike or muskie because of their sharp teeth, but I was not equipped for that since I was fishing for bass. Anyway, I set the hook on a good fish and shortly felt several strong tugs. I thought I had a nice bass but it didn't jump out of the water like they usually do. In our little "tug of war" he wasn't giving an inch and suddenly dove under the boat, snapping my line. I'm not sure what it was but I think it was a muskie or pike that bit through the line.

After a hearty breakfast each day in the lodge we would return to our cabin and make sure our rods were ready to "do battle" with these denizens of the deep. The lodge had several 4' muskies and pike adorning the walls and we were eager to ply our skills and have our own wallhanger. While Mike was tying on his favorite red and white bucktail spinner, I was rigging my rods for bass. I usually used a 5" rubber worm with a 2.0 worm hook and a small splitshot weight about 4" up the line. The splitshot has a small slit on one side which you clinch with pliers to hold onto the line. With no pliers in sight I decided to close it with my teeth while holding it in place with my tongue. I clamped down and got it. Not the line, my tongue! I tried to call Mike, "I aught my ongue an' I ant et it out!" He came in and thought I'd hooked myself.

"No-o-o, pitsot," I said, speaking as best I could. "Get iars!"

After a few suspenseful moments, he was able to pry open the splitshot and remove it. Luckily, I didn't have to go to the hospital emergency room while holding my fishing rod alongside! 



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