



# Mill-Direct News

*Living the Log Home Lifestyle*

Spring 2021

## VIEW FROM THE MILL

*By Levi Hochstetler*

Winter has finally arrived! Young folks are skating for the first time this winter. Matter-of-fact I don't think they got to skate last winter at all and the winter before that very little as well. There is at least 6 inches of snow on the ground and according to the weather man there will be more coming along with low temperatures dipping to as low as zero for at least another week. This is good for the logging industry who had difficulty getting into the woods the last several mild winters.

Unfortunately, Joseph Miller, the logistic person that coordinated the shipping and deliveries has moved on. My son, Matthew, first shadowing him for a month is now slowly taking the reins.

Starting this January, we are now owned by seven partners, my six oldest sons and I. This is in addition to four others and my one son-in-law that work as employees and the youngest son David, who is still in school. They all work here in different capacities. Joseph, sales manager; Samuel, production manager; Edwin, maintenance manager; Steven, quoting & estimating; Nathan, timber sales and marketing; Jacob, warehouse manager; Matthew, buyer & logistics; Aaron, maintenance; Mark, shop production; James, stickering lumber; and my son-in-law Vernon, who is also in maintenance.

The Covid scare seems to be slowly abating. Accordingly, we are cautiously moving forward with plans for Log Cabin Days this fall. We look forward in getting to see our many friends again, along with future friends that we don't know yet! The tentative date is set for Fri. and Sat, September 17th and 18th.

**Hochstetler Log Homes, LTD**

552 State Route 95, Loudonville, OH

**800-368-1015**

## Why are “Controlled Kerf” Logs so Important?

*- by Nathan Hochstetler*

Approximately 10 years ago, Hochstetler Log Homes discovered a method that would help control checking in logs by “kerfing.” This was done in response to clients wondering if anything could be done to eliminate, or at least minimize, the cracks that appeared in the logs. Thus inspiring Hochstetler to find a solution.

Checks are a naturally-occurring phenomenon when wood dries out and shrinks. As the cell walls dry, their thickness decreases, initiating mechanical forces to occur and causing drying stress. These forces build up until a crack (check) develops, thus relieving the stress. Checks can NOT be completely eliminated in solid logs, but can be minimized in several ways. Air-drying logs, which gradually removes moisture from the log, and then finishing with kiln-drying, helps. Don't go with the myth that using green logs will eliminate checks, for logs will dry even once installed.

Hochstetler introduced another idea. The idea to “Kerf” cut logs is based on the same principal as concrete control (expansion) joints. If concrete isn't cut within 24 hours after pouring, it will create its own “stress” cracks, resulting in cracks all over. Similar to the control joint cut in new concrete, the kerf in logs is created by making a cut 1” deep by 1/8” wide through the bottom of the stacking log, thus forcing most of the checks to occur on the same side of the kerf. The result is less checking on the visible faces of the log.



*continued on page 2*

## Log Home Advantages - *by Levi Hochstetler*

**Log Homes are more Environmentally Friendly.** Wood is both recyclable and renewable. Not so with steel, concrete, drywall and most other building components. While steel is recyclable it is not renewable. When the iron-ore leaves the mine that natural resource is gone forever. And what's more, it takes many times more energy to manufacture steel into a usable product than wood! For one, it takes a huge amount of energy to melt and roll or cast it into something usable such as steel studs and I-beams. Even recycling steel, while a good thing, leaves a huge carbon footprint in the re-melting process. On the other hand, very little energy is needed in manufacturing wood components.

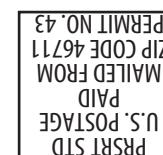
Unlike wood, concrete and drywall aren't renewable and are virtually not recyclable. So, if you are concerned about your environmental foot print, use wood. A solid wood home can be built with zero carbon effect. However, most important of all is the fact that as trees grow they take carbon dioxide out of the air and return oxygen back into the air! Not until the tree is mature does that cycle stop. This makes it not only desirable but important that

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*continued on page 6*



# Pleasant Hill

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The Pleasant Hill offers a spectacular view of the landscape from its expansive rear windows and deck. This popular plan is ideally suited for entertaining with its impressive entry, guest dressing and bathroom combination, and spacious great room with fireplace and exposed timber and tongue-and-groove ceiling. The master suite features a large walk-in closet and bath with space for a hot tub. Additional living space can be added in the walkout basement.

No matter what the season, this home puts you "in touch" with Mother Nature and its infinite beauty.



## Why are "Controlled Kerf" Logs so Important?

- continued from page 1

It took years of experimenting and research for us to incorporate this idea into our log homes but we didn't want to produce any products that didn't meet our standards in appearance and structural performance. Only after exhaustive testing of numerous sizes and lengths of logs were we satisfied that this helps significantly control both the size and quantity of checking. A new in-line machine was set-up in 2019 to produce this kerf cut, without having to add another operator.

In addition to reducing checking, this also helps with the performance of stain on the exterior. Our new office is constructed with control "Kerf" cut logs and they are noticeably straighter with minimal checking. We invite you to visit our office and see first-hand how Hochstetler produces, "Log Homes Done Right."



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**September 17 & 18, 2021**

# **LOG CABIN DAYS**

## **at Hochstetler Log Homes**



- Sample mouth-watering barbecue chicken, pastries, homemade apple cider and delicious kettle popcorn.



- Exhibits and seminars that will guide you through the log building process and help you make your dream log home a reality.



- Self-guided tour of several beautiful log homes, including our McKay and Black Fork models.

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### **CUSTOMER TESTIMONIALS**

"We love our home. The sales person was great to work with from the very beginning. He listened to our ideas, plans, expectations, limitations and the need for a quick build time. We pretty much had designed our home and needed a professional to finalize and put it to scale in less than 6 months. Our builder gave us good reviews of Hochstetler too, which means a lot when making a big investment."

-- Fordyce-Etna, OH

"We now have a beautiful, well-built log home, to hopefully enjoy for the rest of our lives. It has taken a lot of money, time and our own labor to get to this point. But it was worth it all! The people at Hochstetler are as high quality as the homes they sell. The whole process was a tremendous undertaking, but the people at Hochstetler never let us down."

-- Flaums-Hillsboro, OH

"We have been wanting to build a log home for many years. Hochstetler Log Homes was always there to answer questions. Everything Hochstetler said was included in the package, was there. The sales rep and his staff were really knowledgeable in any issues that arose. Very pleased with this company and their products."

-- Mathews-Mooreland, OK

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# Picture Perfect SUNSETS

by Nathan Hochstetler



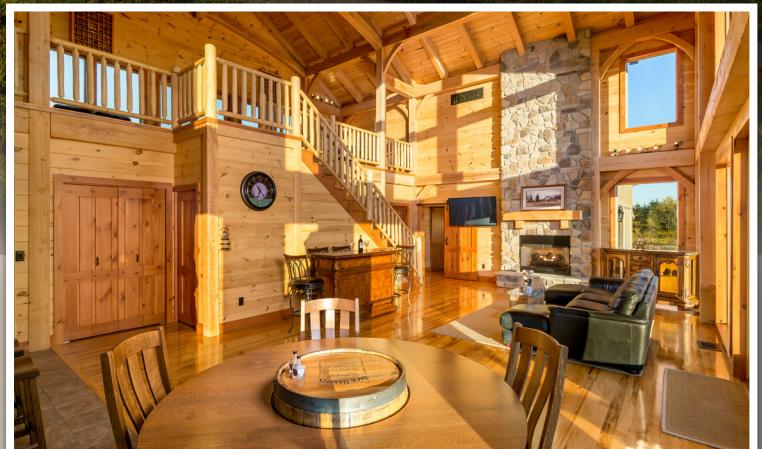
- Photography by Style Life Photography

*M*

Many people travel thousands of miles to witness breath-taking sunsets - from the shores of oceans to the scenic vistas in our National Parks... the ever changing colors of sunsets are both captivating and memorable. The Mensch's are fortunate in being able to see these awe-inspiring spectacles almost daily from their home perched atop a secluded mountain in Western Pennsylvania.

A personal friend of the Mensch's was a realtor and found this ideal property for them to build on. Due to their hectic business lifestyles they lead in the city, this mountain top retreat provided a welcome and relaxing change of pace. And, without any nearby neighbors (at least 2-legged ones) they are content in their new lifestyle.

The Mensch's had a vision of how their home was going to look. "We had our property, the design laid out, but we didn't have any material provider on the schedule. When talking with an Amish builder, Jake Detweiler, he highly recom-



mended Hochstetler Log Homes, as an honest and reputable company that they could trust to provide the home they envisioned," Mr. Mensch said. At the time, Jake was building another home for Hochstetler, just minutes from their property and invited them over to see and feel the quality of the material first-hand. After touring the home, they knew Hochstetler was the company they would partner with to provide their dream home.

"We wanted a home with lots of windows," said Mr. Mensch. They certainly achieved this with over 775 sq. ft. of glass filling the home with natural light and

beautiful views of the outdoors. When leaving the foyer and entering the kitchen, you will stop in utter amazement as you take in the massive curved timber trusses which adorn the cathedral ceiling, as well as the vast glass windows, bringing the outdoors into the great room and dining area. The well-designed kitchen with beautifully-crafted Hickory cabinets, makes being a chef compelling. The open loft overlooks the great room and serves as their home office, with a deck off the back.

During the cold Pennsylvania winters, you will be tempted to enjoy your favorite book, as you curl up close to the large, double-face stone fireplace shared between the great room and master bedroom. Breakfast in bed is inevitable, when you have a crackling fire going in the fireplace while enjoying the morning light coming in through the large glass doors of the master bedroom.

When asked about his experience with Hochstetler, Mensch's answered, "It was great, if there was any material shortage, we could count on it to be there very directly. They made sure they don't give the builder any downtime." This is very important when you are paying a builder by the hour.

Their home is exactly how the Mensch's had envisioned. In 2020 they saw some of the most gorgeous sunsets from their home, as America experienced phenomenal sunsets created by the sand storms occurring in other countries. "The favorite part of where we live, is our neighbors, says Mr. Mensch... we have none. It's us and the wildlife. We have seen over eleven bears, since we moved here in June of 2019. One time we had a mama bear and three cubs right in our front yard!" 



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

## Log Home Advantages - continued from page 1

we harvest these older trees so that new younger trees have room to start the cycle all over again. Think filters, young trees work as air filters cleaning our air but once they become mature the filter gets clogged, and not only that, they release the carbons back into the air as they decay. Jad Daley, president of American Forests and co-chair of the Forest-Climate Working Group wrote that in 2019, wood products contributed 103 million metric tons CO<sub>2</sub>e to carbon sequestration from U.S. forests – about 14 percent of our total carbon sink. This is equal to the emissions of more than 21 million cars! In other words, you can feel good about consuming wood because it actually benefits the environment helping the forest replenish our clean air.

Then the question might be, aren't we going to run out of trees? R. Bruce Hoadley writes in his book "Understanding Wood," fire, insects and decay consume as much timber as man. With better forest management we can be confident we will never run out of wood. In 1952 there was an estimated 5.4 million acres of forest land here in the state of Ohio. Currently there is an estimated 8 million acres of forest - a net gain of over 48%! I'm happy to say, according to the ODNR, that even today the forest here in Ohio is growing faster than what's being harvested.

**Log Homes allow you to see what needs to be maintained.** All homes, including brick homes, need to be maintained. However, homes built with natural material, such as log homes, are generally looked on as having more maintenance than some types of homes such as vinyl sided homes. However, with everything considered there is not much difference. For one, on the inside there is less painting, just like furniture the finish stays good indefinitely. Outside, a log home is far less likely to get damaged with high winds during storms. Most important, though, is the fact that with a log home you can see the first drip of water leakage, whereas in a stick home it can be leaking behind the drywall, and causing decay for years before being detected.

**Log homes have fewer insects.** In spite of conventional wisdom, that statement is true, providing the log home is designed and built right. The biggest reason is because there are no cavities in solid log walls for insects to nest in as there is in a 2x stick home. So why do log homes have the reputation of being more prone to insects? It probably stems from the stories of the old days when the logs were literally set on the ground or at best with inadequate stone foundations. This provided the perfect home for numerous insects including termites. Another reason may be that on the day the first ant crawls into your log home you will be able to see them, whereas in a stick home there can be a large colony of ants hidden inside the cavity behind the siding for years before you finally discover them. Not to mention a host of other insects and critters, including mice, who love to live there and raise their families.

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**In conclusion.** There are many advantages in owning a log home. In fact there are many more than what are listed, these are only a few of the main ones. Is there more maintenance? Yes, maybe. But so it is with anything else of value. There are so many delights in owning a log home that far out outweigh the disadvantages. So I will close with this last most important element in owning a log home.

**Log homes leave a legacy.** Leon and his wife Evelyn had a log home built in northern Michigan in 2016. Today they, three children with their spouses, nine grandchildren and one great grandchild, as well as many friends, enjoy the fruits of their labor. Besides coming together for birthdays and other memory experiencing events they have started a "family tradition" of having the family and extended family "gather at the cabin" every year during the 4th of July and Labor Day weekend. The desire is that many years from now, long after Leon and Evelyn have moved on, the close-knit family, which will be much larger then, will continue to enjoy the fruits of their labor and "gather at the cabin." What a legacy! Call us today and have us help you get started building "your own legacy." After all, it's your children's heritage! 



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# CABIN FEVER

## "Northwoods Special"

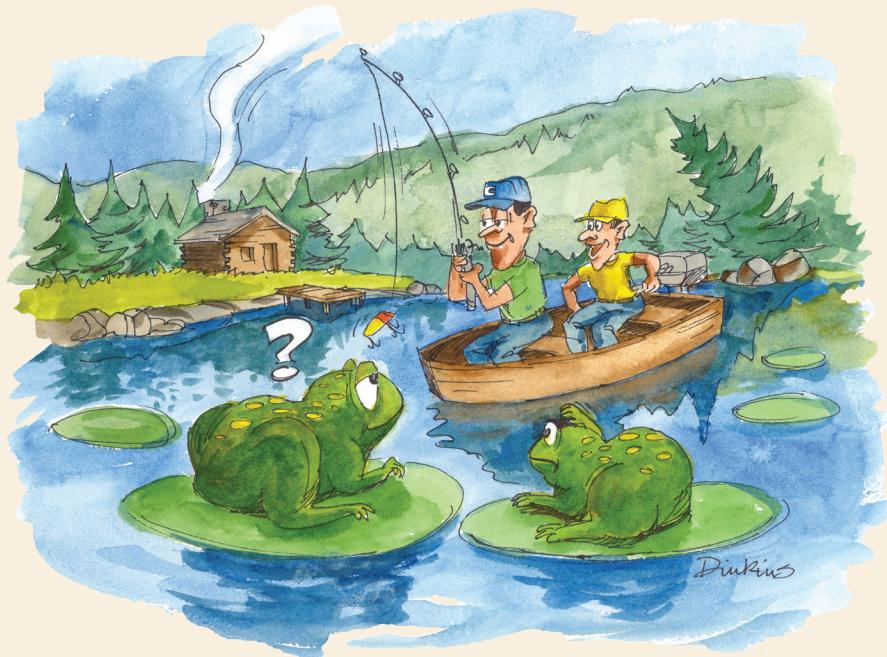
by Bill Dinkins

As a youngster, I often thought of going up to Canada on a fishing trip some day, but the reality was it didn't seem possible since our family had little extra spending money and just paying the rent and buying groceries was a challenge. But occasionally I'd pick up an old copy of Sports Afield or Field and Stream and my dream would resurface. There were photos of 30 lb. Lake Trout, succulent Walleyes, and knuckle-bustin' Northern Pike and Muskie reaching from belt to toe. That had to put a bend in the old fiberglass rod I surmised.

At age 15, I joined the Boy Scouts and my life changed forever! Our Scoutmaster, Bob, noticing our enthusiasm for fishing asked a local fisherman to come and talk to us about going to a small fishing camp on Crow Lake in Ontario. He described the Bluegills as "big as his hand." Not exactly what I wanted to hear, but he did mention there were also bass and pike in the lake. Since we had limited funds Bob said we could possibly raise the money by collecting newspapers and selling them to the recycling center. Bob had an old trailer bed for starters, but we would need to add railing to the sides and get it safe for the road. Each Saturday we would run our route and stack papers 'till they reached the top rails. Then we would go to the collection place, drive onto the scales, get weighed, empty the papers and drive the vehicle back over the scales. The difference was the total weight of the papers and the profit was then figured. One day, when Bob wasn't looking, one of the boys climbed into the vehicle and we covered him with papers to add a little more weight! We worked every Saturday, all summer, and finally had enough money for the much anticipated trip. Meanwhile, each kid was trying to assemble the necessary gear to catch that fish of a lifetime. Bob's fisherman friend had told us to get steel leaders for the pike since their razor sharp teeth would slice through nylon line. "And, don't forget to buy a couple Dardevle lures," he advised. These red and white striped spoons were the "go to" lures for the serious pike fisherman and have probably caught more trophies than any other lure. I even invested my "lawn mower savings" in a Pflueger Summit baitcasting reel, a significant upgrade from my cane pole! (I had spotted this reel months earlier in a Sears catalog and even folded the edge of the page as a constant reminder).

Early one August morning we headed north in Bob's green '49 Mercury stationwagon and only stopped a couple times for gas and at fruit stands for quick snacks. Food was the last thing on our minds! After checking into camp my buddy, James, and me headed down the lake to a sheltered cove, full of lily pads. I tied on the "never-fails" Dardevle spoon and began casting in all directions. Suddenly, I had a sharp tug and I reared back with my rod. A second later a fish rocketed out of the water and splashed down in an impressive spray of water. But it wasn't a pike...or a walleye...or even a muskie - it was a LARGEMOUTH bass. Nonetheless, it was eatin' size so I put it on the stringer. As we continued casting without any luck I noticed there were large bullfrogs sitting on top of the lily pads. I wondered if they would strike our lures. I tied on a small bass plug and we carefully oared over to the nearest frog. I dangled the lure about 6" in front of him and he lunged for it, impaling himself on the treble hooks as he frantically thrashed in the water. I'd heard of gigging for frogs but never fishing for them! We approached each frog the same way, and soon realized these amphibians were not at the top of the food chain...or any chain, for that matter.

As we placed each frog on the stringer, I began visualizing a scrumptious northwoods dinner... Twelve golden brown frog legs with maple-flavored brown beans and cinnamon-flavored applesauce. Yum! As the sun slowly descended behind the towering pines to the west, our day on the water was about to end but was just getting started as we prepared our "Northwoods Special." 



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