

Homeworkers Organized for More Employment

This Time

VOL. XXXIV NO. 2

Orland, Maine 04472

FALL 2009

The Dignity of Manual Labor-

Labore Est Orare

By Sister Marie Ahern

“Exercise of mind and body...productive activity...work is prayer...prayer is work.”

One of the more exciting happenings around H.O.M.E. is our production of lumber and shingles. When Lucy hears the mills starting up in the morning she says: “What a beautiful sound!!” And it is. It is the sound of hard work, pride in one’s work, building homes for the homeless, skill, and contagious energy. Over the past several months production has continued to increase, due primarily to quality workers - our sawyers. Eric Snowe operates and manages the Shingle Mill, with David Smith joining him recently. Clint Clagett operates and manages the Saw Mill and has done so for several years.

I asked Eric to reflect with me about his work. Here are some of his comments: “I don’t like to sit around and do nothing. I grew up in Brooklin and Sedgwick...worked all my life, mostly logging. I love our Shingle Mill. Every day I start the day by checking every part of the mill - grease, oil, diesel, blade sets, etc. I line up the work for David, reviewing all the safety issues. It’s a dangerous job and we need to be very safety conscious. I try to be both strict and patient.”

On a good day, with sufficient stock, Eric tells me the mill can put out 3 to 4 squares a day (12-16 bundles). We sell all the “waste” from the mill: shingle hair for mulch and bedding; edgings for kindling; slab bundles for camp wood. Cedar shingles are used to sheathe all the houses we build and we have a healthy number of outside sales. We don’t cut #1 custom shingles, but high quality #2 cedar; every bundle complies with the state codes regarding size, gaps, tapering, etc. Some cedar logs we send over to the Saw Mill to fill orders for boat builders and cabinet makers. With prices at \$18.75 a bundle - \$75 a square - plus the sales of waste products, the Shingle Mill can gross over \$30,000 a year.

Remember the origins of our mills: vertical integration - create jobs. Long ago we realized that if people needed affordable homes, we could purchase wood lots, harvest logs, mill the boards and dimension lumber, mill the cedar shingles, and build the homes...and create jobs every step of the way.

The first saw mill was basically a gift from Tony Poulin. Tony (Lucy’s brother) had serious heart surgery and was unable to run his mill in Norridgewock any longer. With enormous effort and tremendous generosity, Tony managed to move it all to H.O.M.E., oversee the set-up, and train the workers. Clint Clagett has managed superbly in the Sawmill, doubling the income this past year. Clint is a master at multi-tasking. Any given morning, he will check in, saying there’s a pickup of 500’ of 2x4’s - someone’s coming in to buy a truck load of sawdust - can I put in an order for shingle stock - we need some replacement safety gear - I’m teaching a couple of guys to use a small chainsaw to cut up trash wood - and on it goes. Clint is organized and on top of it and thoroughly enjoys working there. Of all departments at H.O.M.E. the Saw Mill is showing the best profit.

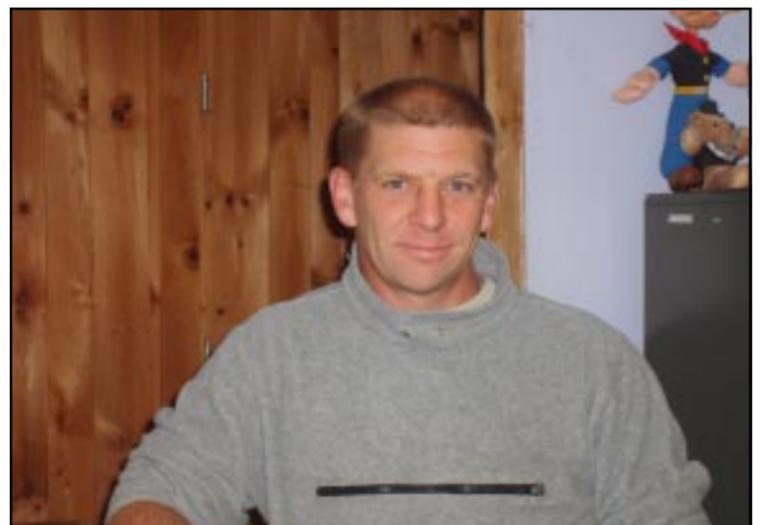


Clint, Eric and David

Recently I had a lengthy conversation with Clint, and what came through loud and clear was that he truly has the heart and philosophy of an Emmaus man. He loves working the sawmill and has done so for many years. He enjoys the creativity of it. If a moneyed person comes to the mill for 10,000 feet of lumber, and another man comes for 100 feet of boards to finish his hen house, Clint will help the latter person first.

“I love being able to meet the needs of those who need it most for their survival.” “I do do a lot of outside sales...when it comes to money we’re glad to get it. I like to see those with money give back in some way. Personally I’m not motivated by money. If I were, I would be working somewhere else. But I love H.O.M.E... and all the ways we are able to help people. In all my years here, H.O.M.E. has never turned it’s back on me. I’ve worked with a lot of good people and I’m learning all the time. Tony Poulin taught me a lot and Al Sandelli taught me, too. Al came and rebuilt the brow, extending it to carry more logs.”

We are proud of our sawyers here and hope their dedication to work and their spirit is contagious. I’d like to close with a quote from Senator Ted Kennedy: “The work goes on, the cause endures, the hope still lives and the dreams shall never die.”



Eric Snowe



Clint Clagett working in the Sawmill

H.O.M.E./EMMAUS is a nonprofit organization dedicated to keeping and enhancing the quality of life for low-income and homeless families. Through services, stewardship of resources, and shared responsibility, we aim to bring forth new possibilities for food, jobs, shelter, low-income housing, education and self sufficiency.

“Serve First Those Who Suffer Most”

H.O.M.E. is part of the International Emmaus movement





Letters

The following are excerpts from letters we've received since our last issue of *This Time*:

We decided to publish the following letter in the paper because it touched our hearts greatly. This letter was accompanied by a donation of \$1000.

Sr Lucy,

Ever since I first visited H.O.M.E. this is what I have wanted to do. Back when I was young I had four children. There was no help no food stamps. City Hall told me to come back when my husband died. He had an accident at work and was laid off. I had pneumonia and both lungs collapsed; no money for medicine; was not able to find an apartment. They had recently passed a law you could not refuse to rent to families with children. We found an apartment. The owner was prepared to rent to us then she looked at me and said "First get rid of two of your children"

You at H.O.M.E. have done so much for those who are not heard. For when we pass onto be with the Lord our wishes are not always done. So this is my wish for H.O.M.E.

A few years ago when you lost so much by someone you trusted, on a small scale I had it happen to me. A young girl from a lovely family wanted to work so I asked if she would like to dust and vacuum on the day her mom drove her.

Her mother wanted to work in the kitchen doing dishes then she had her husbands son come over, I thought he came to check on his wife she had 2 cancer surgeries this spring.

No. She called him to come help her throw out everything even the food in my oven.

Please send letters to:

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The jam I just made all my juices - sweetened tea, water, coffee and anything he could throw in 20 large trash bags. I was in shock.

I guess it is all right to treat people like this. It was a few hundred dollars worth of items.

Where I do not drive and can not walk I do not expect others to make unnecessary trips. I have always tried to do something for others no matter how small it is. I can not let what happened to me change what I do for others. My love to all.

My Prayers

Sylvia

Lucy,

May God continue to bless you and your work as we celebrate the feast of St Francis you and your H.O.M.E. community remind us of the work St Francis did for the poor and challenged. Mary and Jim McGrath

" I long to accomplish a great and noble tasks, but it is my chief duty to accomplish humble tasks as though they were great and noble. The world is moved along, not only by the mighty shoves of its heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker.

- Helen Keller

"Serve First Those Who Suffer Most"

This Time

is published by H.O.M.E. Inc., PO Box 10,
Orland, Maine 04472.

Part of the World Emmaus Movement

We send it out to anyone who is interested in our community, but we need your support and tax deductible donations to keep our missions going. Please let us know you like this newsletter and if you would welcome an electronic version on our web page instead of this paper one!

www.homecoop.net

Hi Lucy,

I especially enjoyed your observation of "teddy" the work horse. "Horses generally are nice people".

I used to say to my biology students " who teaches animals to love?" My reason for asking that question was to point out that it seems to be innate - the nature of this basic spirit or essence.

Any way there was Teddy by his attention expressing his compassion for you.

Love is universal, if we all looked for it in others and practiced expressing it in our selves it would certainly be a better world.

Thanks for all you and H.O.M.E. do in that expression of compassion and love.

Love John

Dear Lucy,

Thank you for your letter. I continue to be inspired by and grateful for the work that you and all at H.O.M.E. do each day. Please pass along my good wishes to all for a warm, healthy, peaceful autumn and holiday season. With Love and appreciation.

Libby

H.O.M.E. /EMMAUS Fall Appeal 2009



"Serve First Those Who Suffer Most"

" The Harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few" - The Good Shepherd

Dear Friends,

At my mother's farm we worked too hard, before school and after school so going to school was a rest. I loved school but as adulthood, middle age and beyond came I loved work too. Reading of the Monastic life I remember that the combination of work, study and prayer were the perfect balance for human beings.

The works of Mercy inspired us to keep on with food, shelter, counseling, daycare, housing, education and the soup kitchen. Anything we can do to help a human being become who God is calling them to be, anything to relieve need and help people to help themselves and in turn help us help others.

Teddy was a work horse. A big old bay near to the ground always ready to pull a load of wood or hay. One day we were yarding wood, I fell down, he stopped and turned to see if I was o.k. I have never forgotten that look of his. Love is what I called it.

Good fortune has blessed us this past Summer. Hundreds of volunteers have roofed, painted repaired and worked to complete homes. We are now entering a busy season, Wreaths are made, decorated and shipped and we are travelling to Craft Fairs at churches in Massachusetts and Connecticut. This really improves our income but we are dependent on you our friends to help support our work.

Please donate if you are able.

God Bless You

Your Sister,

Lucy Poulin

Lucy Poulin



Lucy and Teddy - 1986