



BEHIND THE FRONT LINES

BY ROBBO HOLLERAN

While logging has been traditionally a “man’s world” there have always been a few women out in front, felling trees, running equipment, or running whole businesses. I would like to draw attention to the women who work behind the scenes in various supporting roles. We don’t have to look far to find that this is common, and almost typical. Women, often the wife of the main fellow whose name is on

the truck door, are typically bookkeepers, office managers, or full partners in every sense. Sometimes they are the common sense in the partnership. “Do we really need that new machine right now?”

Right near my office in Chester, Vermont, there are three women in support roles among contractors that I have done business with for years, whom I will highlight here. Often, I have



Outstanding Logger award in 2015.

Laurie is a full partner, and there have been jokes about the P&L standing for “profit and loss” though Laurie would be credited with the profit. Since 2018 they have “downsized” into smaller-scale excavating and a firewood business with a volume of about 600 cords per year. Laurie manages the office and paperwork part of the business, which has increased over the years with all sorts of state and federal requirements. She goes for parts and does some labor as needed. She also schedules all the firewood orders and deliveries.

Rolling Meadows Farm is another diverse “logging and other stuff” business based in Reading, Vermont. David and Susan Goodhouse are the brawn and brains of the operation. The business grew from an old skidder and farm equipment to a full-scale cut-to-length logging show with modern John Deere equipment. They also do about 250 cords of split firewood per year, plus a thousand cords of log-length firewood, plow 175 driveways, cut 15,000 bales of hay (in a good year, whatever that is), and provide a range of caretaking and property services as well.

Susan is a full partner and active in managing the office for more than 25 years. She had worked outside the home before having kids, and with the kids, she became a “stay-at-home mom” helping part-time in the business. As the kids grew and the “mom duties” declined, her role in the business grew. She



ROBBO HOLLEMAN

nearly as much communication with the spouse, since she is the one near a landline or computer, or who can answer a question about the paperwork while the fellows are out in the cold and mud. Cell service has gotten better, but it is still not reliable in the Northern Woods.

Laurie Goodrich of P&L Trucking and Excavating lives and works in Chester. Her husband Palmer is one of the first loggers I worked with 40 years ago, and Laurie has been there all along. Their business started in 1978, with a John Deere 440 skidder. It evolved to include more and bigger equipment, a log truck, and then the ancillary excavating equipment that is always helpful. By the late 1980s, they had full-scale excavating and trucking services. They were early into whole tree chipping and a full-scale mechanized logging show. They continued in full-service logging and excavating until 2018, earning the Vermont

Opposite page: Palmer and Lauri Goodrich. Above: Susan Goodhouse

runs the office, which involves a lot of time on the phone and at the computer. David is not much of a computer guy. Susan also does payroll, accounting, taxes, state reports, and deals with many of the business management aspects. She is pretty good at shopping around for equipment and searches the online listings as their needs arise. And she manages a few rental units. Now she enjoys the “grandma duties,” too.

Dino Zampini grew up working in logging, excavating, and property services, also in Reading, Vermont. When Dino was just a boy, his dad would drive around to various jobs and go out into the woods with him. In high school, he started a small lawn business with a few clients. That soon became “all things landscaping” including excavation, road building, masonry, and some logging. He grew to thrive on all aspects of running a logging business. The business grew to include invaluable relationships that enabled them to take Dino’s love of logging and run with it. Zampini Log & Land was able to emerge from family partnership, community support, and shared passion for keeping Vermont’s fields and forests beautiful.

His wife Ana is “Head of Administration.” She does all the accounting for both businesses, which includes running payroll and managing accounts payable and receivable. She tracks all income and expenses and is learning more about the forestry industry. She also manages all the paperwork behind keeping a fleet of vehicles and equipment going. If it involves a computer in any way, that’s her job. She also runs errands, buys parts, and does anything to help keep everyone going. Ana has recently been elected to the board of directors for the Vermont Forest Products Association.

She enjoys being behind the scenes, enabling others in the crew to do what they do best. They are building a family business to pass down to the next generation, which is incredibly rewarding. She says it is important for kids to see their family working together to accomplish something that will benefit all of



Ana Zampini

us. It gives a great sense of purpose.

All three supporting women have had the chance to “save the day” by being available to run an errand, get critical parts, or be the extra person needed at the time. And they all agree that working together is good for their marriage and their family. These are just three examples of the hundreds of women with critical roles “behind the front lines.”

Robbo Holleran is a consulting forester based in Vermont and licensed in three adjacent states. He is an active writer, speaker, and teacher on a wide range of forestry issues. He shares an Outstanding Leadership in Industry Award from NELA with Steve Hardy.

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