

# With help galore, a barn is born

By Mary Esparra, *Times Herald-Record*

Posted Nov. 3, 2002 @ 2:00 am -- Updated Dec 15, 2010 at 10:29 PM

Slate Hill — One hundred and four rafters, 24 posts, 30 friends, one roasted pig. That's what it takes to raise a barn in 2002.

This barn raising began with **Rich Onorati**, a wood craftsman whose dream was realized this weekend.

"There is something romantic about this," said Onorati, who owns a Christmas tree farm and, almost single-handedly, cut each tree used for the timber-frame barn. "It goes back into your history where communities got together and you are building something from the land."

He had plenty of help yesterday. They hammered pegs and moved mountains of lumber. By midday, four walls were up. It was time for lunch.

John Neglia is a UPS driver who met Onorati on his route. The two became fast friends, and yesterday Neglia was there, roasting a pig for the hungry crew. Folks lined up for a taste, then gathered around the campfire on this autumn day touched by snow, marveling at the event unfolding.

Neighbor Mark Beamish, a certified arborist, months ago helped Onorati pick out trees for lumber. He joked that he was a willing "human pack mule" this day, just doing what he could to help a friend.

"A nice fall day, a little fire, what else do you need?" Beamish said.

Beamish's father, Hank, traveled all the way from Rochester for the barn raising. He had been following the barn's progress through phone calls to his son, and Wednesday, his son said it was ready to go. The elder Beamish wasn't going to miss it.

"I love to watch things being built," he explained simply.

Three generations of the Onorati family pitched in. Onorati's wife, Natalie, and the couple's adult son and daughter were there. Grandson Richard III, 12, spent days waxing pegs.

Carolyn Clarke of Middletown brought her mulled cider and doughnuts. The aroma of cider, bonfire, pig roast and fresh-cut lumber filled the air.

"This is just what we need," she said. "The neighbors pitch in. People are still nice."

As the day ended, Onorati stood on the dirt clearing in front of his soon-to-be barn. He smiled as the last wall frame went into position, lifted by his friends, his family and his neighbors.

Excerpt from the *Times Herald-Record*