

# BALE RAISING!



View from the front



Stacks o' bales

This post is coming a bit after the bale raising for a couple of reasons – one we've been crazy busy, and the other is we were very disheartened by the fact that most of our photos of the bale raising are gone in the digital camera equivalent of opening up the back of the camera with film in it. There was some weird format error on our card, and fewer than 1 in 10 of the photos from the incredibly fun bale raising are still readable.... sigh

We are trying to get photos from some of the other folks who were there, and if we can, we'll put up a much more extensive set of photos, but until then... we'll steel ourselves and blog on with the few remaining photos...



Michele, of Boa Constructor shows us how to work the bales

On a fortuitously sunny Saturday November 21st, an intrepid crew of friends and volunteers interested in straw bale construction arrived for our Mohr Family Bale raising. The plan is to turn the pile of straw bales (not hay!) into a well-built and sturdy walls for our library. The goal: deep window seats and high insulation value.

Few people there had any straw bale building experience, but Michele Landegger from [Boa Constructor](#), and Dohnyat, the local straw bale expert, soon turned our rag tag band of surgical robot engineers and straw bale enthusiasts into a crack straw bale construction team. Michele and Dohnyat are shown at right demonstrating how

to notch a straw bale so that it could be fit around the vertical post of the moment frame. This is a technique that we would use over and over as we cut, re-tied, wedged, and stomped those bales into a precision line.



Dhonyat, of Boa Constructor was the super-bale-expert

As with anything, the key is to have the right tools! We had bale saws which are like very large knives with big smooth serrations. You slice the straw more than "sawing" like wood. There are also bale needles which are like enormous sewing machine needles that you use to thread baling twine through to re- tie a bale into a smaller "custom" bale [no pics of the needle, 😞 but a re-tied bale can be seen] and special "reference" 2x4s to check straightness of the walls as they go up.

But, hands down, everyone's favorite tool is "the persuader" a delicate, high-precision tool for gently moving those bales into position.



Meg, Ely, and David "persuade" a bale



Everyone loved The Persuader

After 8 hours of measuring, marking, cutting, tying, hauling, placing, shoving, kicking, stomping and persuading, we had raised the walls, and an exhausted and straw covered crew opened some beers, started the grill, and kicked back for the first official party of the new house... it was outside, around a fire pit, and we sat on straw bales and ate off paper plates – but it counts!

Source : <http://www.301monroe.com/?p=257>