



Steve Tool/Chieftain

It’s hard to tell from the outside that this is an Insulating Concrete Form home, which uses Styrofoam forms filled with concrete as the backbone of the structure.

THE STYROFOAM HOME

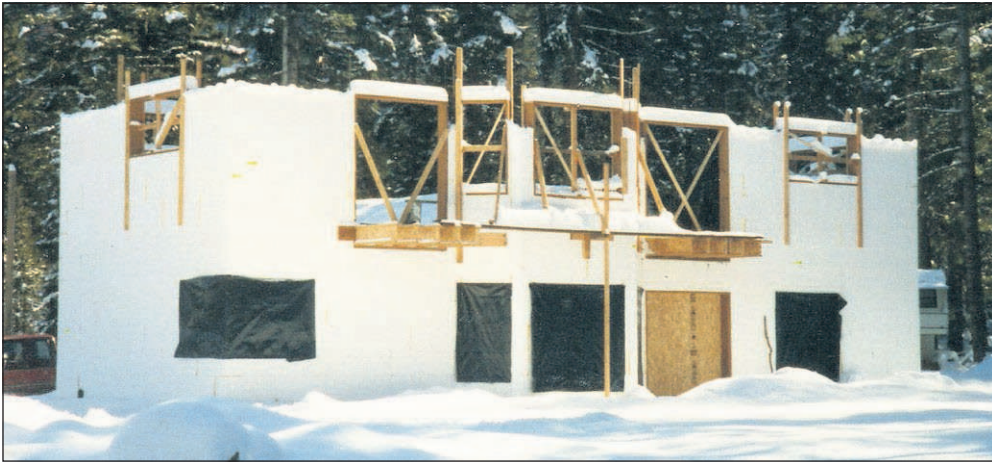
Lostine couple takes road less traveled in building their dream home

By Steve Tool
Wallowa County Chieftain

From the driveway Roger and Sharon Weishoff’s home 6.9 miles up the Lostine River Road, well-manicured grounds surround the log home that resembles many of the up-scale dwellings dotting the Wallowa Valley landscape. In fact, the logs are a facade on the outside walls. The secret behind the facade? Styrofoam.

The word Styrofoam may bring images of crushable picnic coolers and coffee cups to mind, but it is a major component of a construction technique that utilizes Insulating Concrete Forms made of Styrofoam filled with cement as the structure’s backbone. Once you walk into the home’s foyer and are dazzled by the remarkable woodwork and pine paneling, Styrofoam is the last thing that comes to mind.

ICF construction offers stability, soundproofing and superior insulating qualities, according to its manufacturer-



Courtesy photo

The Weishoffs’ home as it was being constructed in January 1999.

ers. But it only recently has garnered popularity in the homebuilding market. The pioneering Weishoffs started building their ICF home in 1998, the year they purchased their 2.5-acre property.

The couple is from the Willamette Valley, where Roger worked as a millwright. He previously hunted in the Wallowa Valley and came away impressed with the landscape and the people. After the couple decided to make the move to the Wallowa Valley, they started attending home shows

to get different ideas about homebuilding possibilities.

The ICF homes struck a chord with the couple, who found themselves particularly impressed with the insulation value — which can vary between R-30 and R-50 — and the ease of installation.

“It was something we figured we could pretty much put up by ourselves,” Roger said.

His previous building experience included building a log home near Salem and remodeling several homes.

The home is 2,800 square

feet with two stories and took several years to build and finish.

“We started in 1998, and the snow came on before we could get it finished,” Roger said. “By the next early summer, when we could start pouring concrete again, we put up the rest of the walls and the roof.”

The interior work took another four to five years to complete.

How it works

The ICF comes in hol-



Steve Tool/Chieftain

The view of the foyer from the top of the Weishoff-built staircase.

low blocks or panels shaped somewhat like cinder blocks, only larger. In the early years of Styrofoam construction, a special glue was used to attach each block to the next before pouring the concrete into the rebar-reinforced hollow spaces in the blocks/panels.

“You can ask my wife about that,” Roger said with a smile. “She did a lot of rebar tying.”

Do it yourself

While the Weishoffs used a contractor on occasion (for example, to pour the slab and foundation), the Weishoffs did

much of the work themselves, with the help of friends Bruce Bibler, Randy Cherry, neighbors and their “church family,” the Wallowa Christian Church.

“We bought a planer/moulder to make our own log siding,” Roger said.

Much of the wood used in the construction was logged locally and planed and milled on site.

Simplicity

The Weishoffs primarily used a table saw, moulder

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Succulents a favorite for dramatic looks and ease of care

By Kathleen Ellyn
Wallowa County Chieftain

They’re like little art installations all by themselves — and in a terrarium they’re a beautiful and stark story of life in the desert.

Succulents, known for their color and ease of care, make wonderful additions both inside and outside any home.

They thrive in sunny, well-drained areas and require very little care. In fact, they will do well beside your computer as a single plant in a coffee cup. More innovative, modern plantings can be a collection of succulents in the seat of an old chair or in the mouth of a milk can.

The simple instructions for most succulents is to allow the dirt to dry between



Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

These Hen and Chicks are a fun display on Vickee Gockley’s porch in Joseph.

waterings and to use a soil that allows the water to run

through easily. You also should know

that succulents all have a winter dormancy, so



Kathleen Ellyn/Chieftain

Simple and sweet, these little succulents — available for purchase at Copper Creek in Joseph — make great, low-maintenance office plants.

don’t overwater during the winter.

Succulents come in a wide variety of colors from blue-green, pink, red, yellow, white, burgundy and near-black.

The leaves can be round,

ruffled, spiky or even berry-like. Some bloom (a succulent can be a variety of cactus, such as Christmas Cactus) and some do not.

Although they like the dry humidity and warm conditions found in most homes — and while they like direct light — they can adapt to lower light. Avoid fertilizing in the winter, but do fertilize in the spring or once a month during the summer.

Check with your nursery or online for the proper balance and frequency of fertilizer for each plant.

Varieties include Burro’s Tail, Hen and Chicks, Crown of Thorns, Christmas Cactus, jade plants, aloe vera, Pincushion Cactus and snake plants.