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I read somewhere that woodworking is the fastest growing hobby in the US. That doesn’t surprise me, since I am continually amazed at the diversity of activities that are collectively referred to as “woodworking.” There’s turning, carving, sculpting, joinery, finishing, marquetry, inlay….the list goes on…..

No wonder, then, that every woodworking catalog seems to have another new gadget we all want to try out….another tool we can’t live without. This is all great….who doesn’t like to play with a new toy?

All this is leading me to this month’s woodworking tip: The best woodworking investment you can make is…..in yourself.

When you are buying any new tool, that purchase will rarely elevate the quality or beauty of your work. It may make your work easier or safer, you may feel good about your new equipment, but, remember, the only thing that makes your work better is…..you. Your own skill base. I have never met a woodworker that has reached a plateau because of not having the right tools. Instead, it is because they have forgotten to invest in their own training and education.

Consider this. About 80-90% of most woodworkers budget is spent on tools, equipment and materials. The remainder might be spent on a class or 2 here or there when time permits. If this sounds like you, I suggest you revisit your woodworking priorities. Most beginning/intermediate woodworkers will see a remarkable improvement in their expertise by increasing their training/education to about 50% of their woodworking budget.
President’s Notes, continued

In next month’s column I’ll explain why, and give you my thoughts about how to put together your own woodworking curriculum. Till then, remember all this is only my opinion…I could be wrong, but its my column and for now, I’m sticking to my story!

Northern Woods, an Exhibition of Fine Woodworking

This year marked a quarter century of shows displaying the highest level of artistic talent from hard-working, dedicated artisans from mostly the Minnesota area. There were 52 entries this year that did not disappoint, as anyone who made it to Southdale can attest. Our three judges, Bob Kinghorn, Jennifer Komar Olivarez, and Stephen J. Skoro had their work cut out for them, to select winners for each of the 14 categories.

Bob Bonde was the Master of Ceremony for this year’s awards banquet. He regaled the audience with one liners in between awards. As an example, “we invited a choir from Stillwater but they were behind a few bars and couldn’t find the right key”. The groans that followed allowed the winners time to find their way to the front for their award. Some of the winners are pictured with their works in the following pages. Thank you Bob, for a great job with this years ceremonies. And special thanks to Richard Tendick for chairing another fantastic show.

Best Turning - Behind the Eight Ball
by Tim Heil

Best Detail - Carved Top Jewelry Box
by Rutager West
Best Original Design - Jax Round Oak Table
by Duff Thury

Judges’ Award - Beginning of Time
by Ken Anderson, PhD

Best Finish - Bubinga Coffee Table
by Peter Schulzetenberg
Best 1st Time in Show - Stool
by Robert Sorenson

Best Carving - End Table
by Bob Kraby

Most Technically Accomplished - Ellipsoid 2
by Tim Gorman
Best Traditional Piece - Philadelphia
Queen Anne Side Chair
by Tony Kubalak

Woodworking for Pleasure
Sanibel Lighthouse
by Bob Paulson
Best in Show - Bathroom Vanity
by Lee Toman

People’s Choise - Ariosa Chiffonier
Best Handwork, Peer Award
by Mark Laub
**Burton and Ruth Elvig Award**

To recognize a piece that exudes any of the following: patience, spontaneity, creativity, persistence, joy, humor, tenacity, plucks, uniqueness, determination, exploration, adventure, silliness, and above all - Love.

![Cryptex by Richard Tendick](image1)

**Paul Lee Award**

Presented in memory of one of Minnesota’s most extraordinary woodworkers. Given to the best entry that has a playful spirit and sound construction.

![Newport Tall Clock by Michael Siemsen](image2)
Nancy Allan and David Winslow Allan started an artistic sign studio after they retired from teaching high school classes. Nancy taught art and David, shop. They describe their work as wood carving, but their work combines graphics, sculpture, painting, gilding, carving, and all the additional techniques needed to make striking signs. Actually the signs are very beautifully done and they have a right to be proud of them.

Signs range in size from small ones to attach to a wall or beside a door to almost billboard dimensions supported by steel frames grounded in concrete footings.

The husband and wife team obviously enjoy their work and working together. This was apparent during the well organized and illustrated presentation. Nancy is the artist and David does the application using machine and hand woodworking tools. But their talents very frequently overlap.

When they started the business, clients were mostly local: resorts, churches, wineries, B&B’s, etc. Over time their reputation for producing eye catching, colorful, and interesting signs spread by word of mouth, newspaper articles, BBB write-ups, their internet web site, and by distribution of business cards. After several years they have become very busy.

A special computer program helps with designs which incorporate logos, paintings, sculptures, photos, and a variety print fonts. This also helps with presentations to clients and allows any necessary changes before work begins. These photographs from a cd rom show the results.

To make the signs durable(nearly always they are exposed to the elements), David uses mahogany, white oak, marine plywood, and high density polyurethane board called Sign Foam. For glue, it’s epoxy. Outdoor sign primers and enamels wear well with minimal fading, a necessity since their work is very colorful.

Most of the time they work in a large room attached to their home next to the kitchen. The messy, dusty chores David does outside even when it is 40 degrees.

One time, and maybe the last time, David used a motorized extension scaffold to apply gold leaf to stone carved lettering above a bank’s second floor windows. There was a breeze so applying the almost molecule thick leaf was exasperating as well as expensive from the loss of several sheets that blew away. Standing on the scaffold was scary and no fun either. We had a fine evening with a happy couple who definitely enjoy their new occupation after retirement.
DISCOUNT SUPPLIERS

The following suppliers offer special discounts to Guild members. To receive a discount you must be a member in good standing and show the merchant your current membership card.

**Abrasive Resources**
900 Lund Blvd #400, Anoka, MN (763) 586-9595 or (800) 814-7358 Sandpaper, coated abrasives, rolls, clearance items - 20% discount.

**Art Betterley Co.**
11160 Central Ave NE (Hwy. 65) Blaine (763) 755-3425 Various discounts depending on product.

**Eide Saw Service**
Dave Heidtke <daveh@eidesaw.com> 1329 Tyler St. NE (Behind Youngblood Lbr.) Minneapolis 612-789-3288 Saw blades, router bits, planer knives, and band saw blades welded to length. 10% discount on all items, sharpening included.

**Forest Products Supply**
2650 Hwy 61, Maplewood, MN 55109 (651) 770-2834. 10% discount on all lumber purchases. www.forestproductsupply.com

**Gardner Hardware**

**Hirshfield/lathrop Decorating Centers**
20+ metro locations, Rochester, St. Cloud. Discounts on all items including stains, varnishes, application tools, etc. Must show membership card. Ask for MN Woodworkers Guild account. www.hirshfields.com

**Holdahl Company**
1925 Annapolis Lane, Plymouth (612) 333-7111 or (800) 777-8992. Commercial cabinetmaker’s supplier but will sell at wholesale to Guild members - router bits, saw blades, abrasives, tools for laminating, laminate, decorative and functional hardware.

**Nob Hill Decorative Hardware**
3027 Holmes Avenue South, Minneapolis (612) 824-7424. Decorative hardware for doors, cabinets and bathrooms. 10% discount, 15% on orders over $1000. www.nobhillhardware.com

**Rockler Woodworking**
Minneapolis, 3025 Lyndale Ave S (612) 822-3338; Burnsville, 2020 W Cty Rd 42 (952) 892-7999; Maplewood, 1935 Beam Ave (651) 773-5285; Minnetonka, 12995 Ridgedale Drive (952) 542-0111 10% discount on all regularly priced items except power tools. www.rockler.com

**Savitt Brothers**
1515 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis (612) 871-1155. Everything in paints & stains, accessory items. Contractor discount to net price.

**Swanson Hardware**
7501 W 27th St, St. Louis Park (952) 925-4083. Cabinet shop supplies, hinges, handles - Wholesale to Guild members. www.swansonhardwareco.com

**Valspar Paint**
Plymouth, 2984 Niagara Lane (763) 557-1361; St. Paul, 106 Water St W (651) 222-3425; 20% discount to Guild members. www.valspar.com

**Woodcraft**
9125 Lyndale Ave S, Bloomington (952) 884-3634. 10% on all items except power tools. www.woodcraft.com

**Woodcarvers Store & School**
3056 Excelsior Blvd, Minneapolis (612) 927-7491. Books, tools, classes, supplies. 10% discount on all items (except electrics 5%). www.woodcarversstore.com

**Youngblood Lumber Co.**
1335 Central Ave., Minneapolis (612) 789-3521, or (800) 933-1335. Wholesale prices to Guild members. www.youngbloodlumber.com

New Members

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Materials

8/4 and 10/4 Hard Maple Slabs. All are 30” wide and 121” long. I rescued this log from being burned! They were sawn on a bandmill, dried in a vacuum kiln to 6%, and are quite flat. There was not a knot in the whole flitch. I’ve got 10 of these available. I’m asking $5/bf, discount possible if purchasing more than one. Contact: jason@jholtz.com, 715 557-0328

Nemadji Woods of Sandstone Minnesota would like to announce that we have a full assortment of hard and softwoods for purchase at very competitive prices (Ash, Maple, Oak, Basswood, Pine, Hickory and Cherry). We have both a Vacuum Kiln and D/H Klin for drying wood. We also have a full service milling operation for custom requests, which is able to produce and replicate moldings. We are able to accommodate the needs of both the large and small wood worker. For types of wood available, pricing and other information contact Ken, Toll Free at (888) 496-5556 or (320) 245-6909 during regular business hours.

Woodturning – Architectural, Furniture components and Artistic. Diameters up to 18” and lengths up to 8 ½ feet. I can accommodate the needs of both the large and small wood worker. For types of wood available, pricing and other information contact Ken, Toll Free at (888) 496-5556 or (320) 245-6909 during regular business hours.

Tools

Steam bending box, 8’ x 12” x 12” with the copper steam manifold inside, opens at both ends, built in the fashion noted in Fine Woodworking some 25 years ago. No longer bend wood, available for free to a good home. Jim Marquardt, “Arkwks” 1500 Duluth St, Saint Paul, MN. 651-774-7993

Having recently overhauled my dust collection system, I have used 4” and 3” PVC pipe, 4” and 3” flexible hose, and fittings; free to anyone who wants to set up a system. All you have to do is call me and pick up the stuff. Mike Hipps 952-949-3589 mandchipps@comcast.net

Restored trade and collector tools from early 1800’s to 1950’s. Large assortment of quality planes, chisels, saws and hand tools. Grey Wolf Antiques will provide current guild members with a 15% discount on all tools. You must present your membership card. Located at Midtown Antique Mall, 301 South Main Street, Stillwater, MN or Email: gwa@lighthousebay.us

Personal & Services

WANTED: Skilled Woodworkers, Cabinet Makers and Craftspeople
St Paul Shipwrights, an award winning shop, is looking for skilled woodworkers/ craftspeople to do restoration and repair on classic wooden yachts.

Minimum Qualifications:
• Advanced post high school training in woodworking
• 2 – 3 years of serious woodworking experience
• Able to understand three-dimensional work, detail work and production
• Motivated, energetic, able to work well in a team

Only applicants meeting the above criteria will be considered.

For more information call or email mark laub at 612.210.7735, or by email mark laub at 763.753.1368 or 612.210.7735. laub at 763.753.1368 or 612.210.7735. boardroomstudios@gmail.com

“MY FAVORITE PARLOR TRICKS” AN INSPIRATIONAL WOODWORKING WEEKEND WITH MARK LAUB

Mark Laub is well known for his distinctive, meticulously detailed furniture, his many awards at Northern Woods and other juried art shows, as well as his love for cheap wine.

This summer, Mark will be hosting a 2 day weekend retreat in his studio and will provide a rare opportunity to learn his approach to creative furniture design and share his secrets to exceptional woodworking embellishment. Topics will include:

• Finding creative design inspiration
• Living without plans and straight lines
• Wood choices
• Marquetry
• Shell inlay
• Decorative joinery
• Texture carving
• Glasswork
• Metal patination

This weekend retreat will be held in Marks beautiful studio in a secluded forest on the banks of the scenic Rum River, one hour north of the Twin Cities. YOU HAVE YOUR CHOICE OF DATES: JULY 12-13, JULY26/27 AND 8/16/17.

Gourmet meals, picnics, wine, forest walks, evening fireside chats and a comprehensive class workbook and reference guide are included. THE DISCOUNTED PRICE FOR MWWG MEMBERS IS $150

For more information call or email mark laub at 763.753.1368 or 612.210.7735. boardroomstudios@gmail.com

Advertising in The Classifieds is provided to members of the Minnesota Woodworkers Guild free of charge. The ads placed herein should be for goods or services that are of general interest to the craftspeople who make up the membership of the guild. Ads for services will run until cancelled. Ads for tools and materials for sale will run for one issue unless renewed. For submissions, renewals and to cancel an ad, please contact Bob Bridigum, e-mail RLBridigum@aol.com or snail mail to 4755 Laura Lane, Shoreview, MN. 5126

NORTHERN WOODS 11 JUNE 2008 / JULY 2008
Mark Your Calendars

June 17th - Tool Testing with TTI

**Description:** Join us for a night of tool testing with our friends from TTI, Inc. TTI designs, markets, and manufactures tools for Ryobi, Milwaukee, Rigid and Craftsman and they would like your feedback. There will be tools to test as well as the opportunity to talk with the folks from TTI to help influence future tool design.

**Location:** Forest Products Supply. 2650 Highway 61, Maplewood, 55109.

Take Highway 36 to Highway 61. North on Highway 61 to County Road C. You’ll see Forest Products Supply on the northeast corner of the intersection.

July 15th - Wood Finishing Simplified – Kevin Southwick

**Description:** A discussion of how to simplify wood finishing by defining some important terminology and applying good decision making before opening a can of finish. Consider using the same type of well planned and careful thought process to finishing that you would use to design and build a beautiful piece of furniture. Kevin Southwick is a wood finishing specialist and instructor in Minneapolis, MN. His shop offers furniture conservation, restoration, custom wood finishing and consultation services. Kevin has studied with Don Williams, Senior Furniture Conservator at the Smithsonian Institute and currently volunteers at the Minnesota Historical Society in the objects conservation lab.

**Location:** Richfield Community Center, 7000 Nicollet Ave. S., Richfield, MN 55423

½ mile north of I-494 on Nicollet Avenue

**Time:** Show & Tell at 7:00 p.m; Program starts at 7:15 p.m.

Check the guild website [www.minnesotawoodworkersguild.com](http://www.minnesotawoodworkersguild.com) for updates.