

# NORTHERN WOODS

Volume 128

August-September 2010

## Windsor Chair construction with Jim Van Hoven

Using tools and methods of 18th century craftsmen, Jim Van Hoven builds Windsor Chairs at his shop in Scandia, Minnesota. Jim gave a very hands-on demonstration for attendees at the June Woodworkers Guild meeting, creating a Windsor chair seat as we watched.

[Full Story...](#)



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## July Meeting:

How does Rutager West create those amazing inlays on the pieces he enters in the Northern Woods Show? Read the story of how he uses a combination of processes he has learned from others and created himself, and uses tools not found in most woodworker's shops.

[Full Story...](#)



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## What's on Your Bench?

MWWG member David Lane is building a hickory chest with dovetailed corners and a shiplapped top attached with brass escutcheons. Read about David's project and the process he used to make a grain-matched drawer front.

[Full Story...](#)

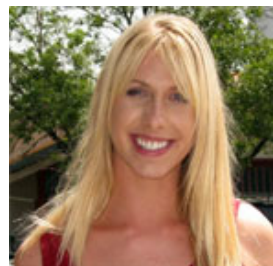


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## New Marketing Director

The Minnesota Woodworkers' Guild is kind of a secret treasure, known to only a small portion of the woodworkers in Minnesota. In order to improve awareness of our organization the board has recruited Serena Johnson to be our marketing director.

[Full Story...](#)



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## San Diego Woodworkers Association

Richard Tendick and Charlie Kocourek attended the San Diego Woodworkers association annual show and met with members of the group's board. Read their write-up on the similarities and differences between that organization and the MWWG.

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## San Diego Woodworkers Association

Richard Tendick and Charlie Kocourek attended the San Diego Woodworkers association annual show and met with members of the group's board. Read their write-up on the similarities and differences between that organization and the MWWG.

[The San Diego Fine Woodworking Association](#)

[Design In Wood Exhibition](#)

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## July Meeting: Inlay work by Rutager West Story and photos by Charlie Kocourek

Forest Products Supply in Maplewood hosted our July meeting. As always, the opening portion of the meeting included a show-and-tell session. Pictured here is Mike Siemsen displaying a handsome handcrafted brace that he brought along on this evening.



### Next it was on to the main event with Rutager West

Many members of the guild have seen the beautiful and precise inlay work of Rutager West on display at the Northern Woods show.

The program committee persuaded Rutager to demonstrate how he makes and installs detailed profiled inlays into his work, such as in the samples below. He graciously shared his inlay techniques, demonstrated the tools he uses and answered members' questions.



Rutager starts by re-sawing solid stock and running it through a Performax sander to get very thin wood. He laminates these thin strips together to make multi-colored sandwiches that he uses to make the inlays.

He then cuts the sandwiches up into pieces about 2" wide. He cuts them up, re-orientes them, and glues them back together. Exactly how he cuts them up and re-orientes them depends on

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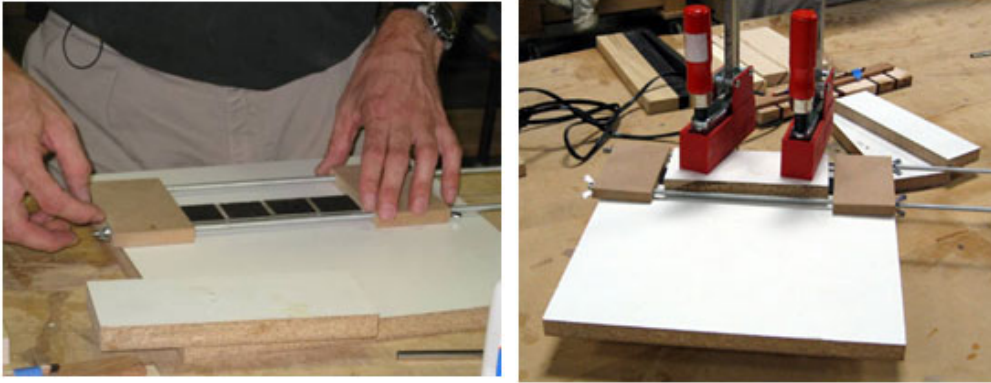
the design for that particular inlay. This is the part of the process that requires 3D spatial thinking and an artist's sense of good design.

Working with such tiny pieces would be difficult with standard full size shop equipment, and Rutager has a variety of ways to cut these little pieces of wood.

Initially he used a small miter box that he bought at a hobby store. Then he bought a very tiny table saw and built a small cross cut sled for it. This is now the main way that he crosscuts the pieces for his inlays.

To glue them together he uses a small clamping jig that he made from a few pieces of particle board and some threaded rod.

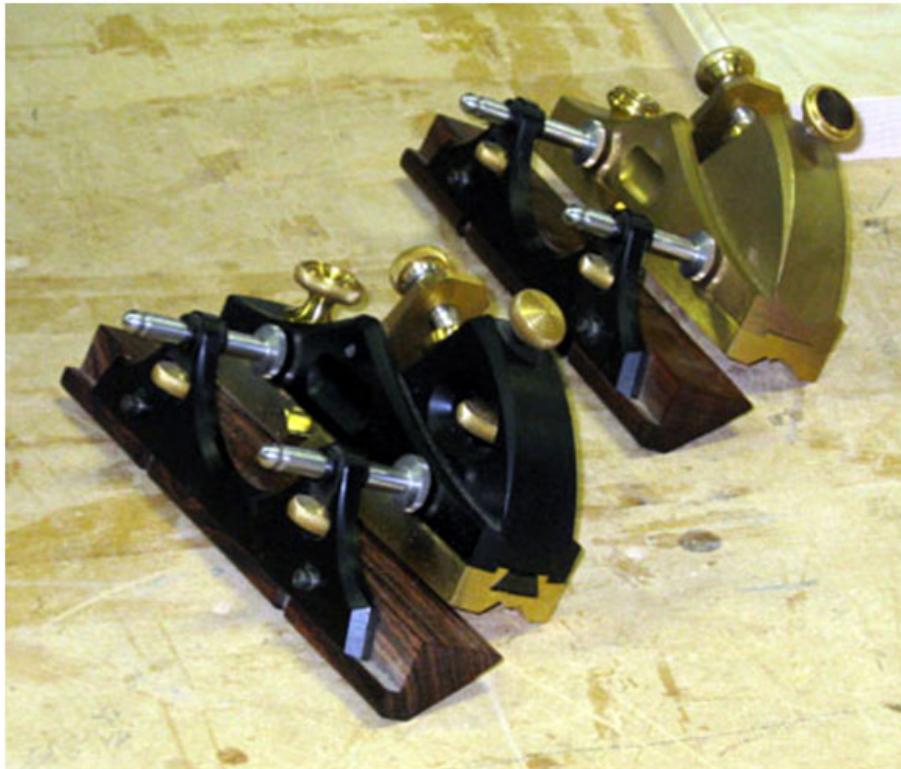
When clamping such thin pieces together they have a tendency to buckle after he tightens them up. So, he also clamps a small piece of melamine over the top to hold everything straight.



Rutager prefers melamine because the glue won't stick to it.

Once the inlay material is prepared, he glues it into rabbets at the edge of the project. After the glue dries, he cuts the profile. Rutager prefers to use a profile plane, but he says you could also use a router.

Rutager's favorite plane manufacturer is Bridge City, and he showed us a few of the planes from his collection, pictured below. The pattern of the inlay material can be seen in the plane shavings in the other photo.





Attendees at the meeting learned a lot but one commented that it is like learning to play a piano, "Watching someone else do it is helpful and inspirational but I know I won't be getting results like that without many, many hours of practice!"

Thanks from the guild to Rutager for this inspirational evening!

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## Serena Johnson, new Marketing Director for Minnesota Woodworkers' Guild

The Minnesota Woodworkers Guild is a fantastic organization! However, the guild is kind of a secret treasure, unknown to many woodworkers in Minnesota. The board would like to ensure more woodworkers are aware of the guild and all that it has to offer, and to that end we sought someone with a marketing background to help get the word out.

One respondent to our call for a volunteer marketing director was recent U of M marketing grad Serena Johnson. She is learning about our organization and has been asked to develop a marketing plan.



Welcome Serena and **Thank You** for offering to help us to get the word out about our organization!

### **Yes, you can participate!**

Some of you are probably thinking something like "Sounds great. I have some ideas about this." If you have an interest in assisting with public relations and marketing for the guild then

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we would like to hear from you! We are forming a committee to work with Serena. This committee will help her to understand more about the guild and to help develop the best plan possible. Subsequently, the committee will be charged with implementing the plan. Please contact me if you are interested in this.

Thank you,  
Charlie Kocourek



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## June Meeting - Building Windsor Chair Seats

Story by David Mitchell

Photos by Paul Schalekamp

The June Woodworkers Guild meeting featured a presentation by Jim Van Hoven on Windsor chairs. Because the construction of a Windsor chair entails considerably more than can be covered in a single meeting, Jim limited his presentation to the forming of the seat, which he did, start to finish, in an hour and a half demonstration. Jim uses only hand tools in the tradition of the 18th century chair making methods.



Jim originally started as a Windsor chair collector. As his knowledge of these chairs increased, he started doing repairs, then pursued instruction in New Hampshire in various periods of chair construction. He started his presentation to the guild with a brief history of Windsor chairs. Often these were simply constructed and considered a poor-man's chair as opposed to society's more elaborate and expensive versions of upholstery and/or framed chairs. Windsor chairs are sometimes referred to as "hole-and-stick" (drill a hole and put in a stick) chairs.

The seat is made from a blank of two-inch thick white pine. Jim buys white pine in 500 board feet lots directly from the sawmill. Because these pieces need to air dry for 12 to 18 months, he keeps a two-year supply on hand. This gives him enough lead time to always have what he needs on hand and still order in bulk. Jim was gracious enough to volunteer to sell (small quantities) of wood to the local Guild members directly from his stock.

Jim creates a template before beginning to work on the seat blank. This paper template gives the outline of the seat, including the "racetrack" or gutter defining the dished-out area for the seat. The lowest point(s) in this area are also marked. Every hole in the seat is defined with a sight line.

Jim explained how the sight lines for the location and angles of the legs, spindles, and stiles are marked on the template. The template's sight lines define the composite angle of splay and

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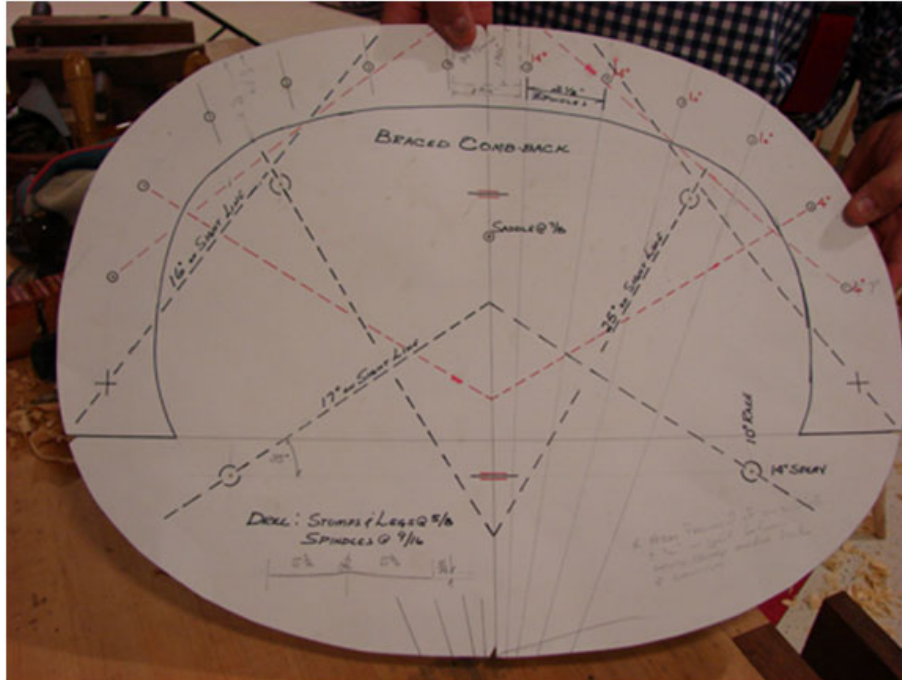
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rake for each hole in the seat.

Construction starts with creating a flat surface on one face of the two-inch thick seat stock. Using a scrub plane to do the majority of the work, at this point Jim concentrates only on creating a flat enough surface to use as a reference plane; very little of this will remain as the finished surface. Once the flat surface is established, the next step is to transfer the general outline shape of the seat from the paper template. A bow saw works well to knock off the corners, then a draw knife is used to round off the edges, followed by smoothing them with a spoke shave.



Returning to the template, Jim marks the "racetrack" on the top of the seat as well as the deepest excavation point(s) on the seat. The "racetrack" is the line at approximately 2 1/4 inches from the back and side edges of the seat that describes the transition from flat to concave. The "racetrack" is usually a consistent distance from the seat perimeter. Use a compass set at this distance to mark the racetrack.

It is also time to mark the deepest excavation point(s) on the seat. Jim used a push drill (Yankee Drill) to create a 1/8 inch diameter hole 3/4 to 7/8 inch deep at what will become the lowest point(s) on the seat. This hole helps him gauge your progress when chopping out the seat depression--when he can no longer see the drill hole, he's gone deep enough.

The saddling out of the seat is done with an adz. Jim placed a small towel on the floor and placed the seat blank on top of it. The towel is to keep the blank from being shocked and possibly cracked from the striking blows of the adz, as well as minimizing slippage on the floor. He stood over the seat, bracing it with his feet. He chopped (carefully--watch your feet) across the grain and with the grain. This method allows him to remove the vast majority of the wood to be hollowed out in just a few minutes.



Once the seat hollow is roughed out, Jim uses the following tools, in this order, to smooth and finesse the seat's surface:

- scorp or in-shave, which quickly hollows out the concave areas
- compass plane, which has a sole rounded in two dimensions, and further smooths the concave area
- travisher, a curved specialty spoke shave used by chair makers to refine the concave areas of the seat
- spoke shave(s), of varying sizes and configurations, to complete smoothing the seat

The travisher could be described as a spoke shave with a convex cutting edge with the handle grip above the cutting line. This is intended to allow work in a concave depression. Other spoke shaves have varying shoe shapes that are useful in certain areas.

The under side of the seat's front edge is beveled with a draw knife and cleanly makes the transition to the rounded side edges shaped with the spoke shave. The goal is to visibly reduce the thickness without reducing the structural strength. This is an esthetic that will make the chair look lighter.

Jim Van Hoven teaches Windsor chair making at Mike Siemsen's [School of Woodworking](http://www.periodwindsors.com). To learn more about Jim's work you can visit his web site at [www.periodwindsors.com](http://www.periodwindsors.com).

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## President's Notes

by Charlie Kocourek

I mentioned in the June/July newsletter that Richard Tendick and I planned to meet with San Diego Fine Woodworking Association officers and attend their annual Design In Wood Exhibition. We wanted to find out how they organize their massive show (27 days long with over a hundred exhibitors from 17 states and several countries) and we wanted to benchmark other aspects of their woodworkers association.

We met show chairman, Bob Stevenson, newsletter editor Ron Rossi, and past president Ed Gladney. Each of them was gracious, accommodating, and very helpful! The trip was definitely worthwhile.

Richard and I put together two separate documents describing what we learned. The first describes elements of their organization the second describes the [Design in Wood exhibition](#). I encourage you to read these two articles. The MWWG board is reviewing this information and hopes to incorporate some of the things we learned into how we do business.

Another very exciting piece of guild news is that we now have a marketing director on the board of directors. Serena Johnson plans to help us improve our marketing of the organization.

I hope everyone is having a great summer, and that your current projects are turning out just the way you pictured them!

Sincerely,  
Charlie Kocourek

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## NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to these new Members:

Ron Allar  
Thomas Rangaard  
Kevin Schwain  
Bill Wegwerth  
Bob Wood  
Bradley Carlson  
Douglas Cohen  
Karl Dennis  
Joe Marmer  
Tim Payne  
Jon Perko  
Greg Hall  
Milton Lenz  
Charles McCarty  
Mac Daves  
Juan-Castellanos Santos  
Kenneth White  
Kevin J. Doyle  
Josiah Newson  
Derek Roek  
John Osen

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## THE CLASSIFIEDS

Advertising in the classifieds is provided to members of the Minnesota Woodworkers Guild free of charge. Ads placed should be for goods or services of general interest to the woodworkers who make up the guild community. Ads for services will run until cancelled. Other ads will run for one issue unless renewed. Submit ads to: [jebeutel@gmail.com](mailto:jebeutel@gmail.com).

### Tools

#### **Variety of tools including:**

**-5 year old Felder multifunction machine**, circle saw, planer, shaper, jointer, horizontal mortiser. Outrigger table. 2 blades, planning cutterhead, groove cutters, counter-profile cutter, guide and copy-cutter copy rings. Original price \$13,000. Would have to hire movers to bring this machine up stairway. CURRENT PRICE \$5,500 (Will deduct the cost of the mover from the sale price.)

**-2 year old Minimax MM 16 bandsaw**, 3 blades. Original price \$2895. Used minimally. Would have to hire movers to bring this machine up stairway. CURRENT PRICE \$2,000 (Will deduct the cost of the mover from the sale price.)

**-5 year old Jet bench mount drill press**. Original price \$375. CURRENT PRICE \$200

**-Porter Cable 1.75 HP variable speed router**. Numerous router bits. Original price \$229. CURRENT PRICE \$150

**-Numerous Bessey clamps plus 3 U clamps**. CURRENT PRICE \$175

**-7 two cherry chisels**. Original price \$169. CURRENT PRICE \$100

**-2 Japanese Dozuki saws**. Original price \$70. CURRENT PRICE \$35

**-Porter Cable 4200 half dovetail jig**. Original price \$149 CURRENT PRICE \$75

**-Bosch 5.5 amp variable speed drill**. Original price \$65 CURRENT PRICE \$30

**-CPO cordless circle saw**. Original price \$99. CURRENT PRICE \$45

**-Oneida Dust collector 5 HP w/o ductwork**. Original price \$1900. CURRENT PRICE \$1,000

**-Tormek Sharpener** Original price \$300. CURRENT PRICE \$200

Contact Margo at (507) 387-8112

**Spray equipment:** Kremlin LVLP spray gun with wrench. Binks 1 quart pressure pot with belt hook. Graco ten foot air hose. Graco ten foot fluid hose. Fluid nozzles 212 and 209. Three liners for the pressure pot. I am asking \$400, firm. I purchased it from a past grad of the NIWF program and he said he has never run any paint through the gun, lines, or pot. I have not had an opportunity to use it myself, and I have recently found a job that will require that I spend more time on the road than at home with my tools. Pictures available. Contact [LisaMGarmoe@hotmail.com](mailto:LisaMGarmoe@hotmail.com) 847.414.2437

**Leigh FMT Jig + Accessory Kit, Bits, & Bosch Router** (retail is 1,407) Selling for \$750 w Router or \$630 w/o router. I purchased New, set them up, and just never used. Contact Cliff Smith 952-432-1425 (South Metro) [venturesmith@charter.net](mailto:venturesmith@charter.net)

**Jet Desk Top Sander with Steel Table** (retail is \$768) Selling for \$430. Purchased New, set them up, and just never used. Contact Cliff Smith 952-432-1425 (South Metro) [venturesmith@charter.net](mailto:venturesmith@charter.net)

**Performax Sander 16-32 Plus**. This sander has only been used for about 5 hours total run time. It has an upgraded rubber belt (Plus the unused original belt), in-feed and out-feed tables, a stand with locking Performax casters, several rolls of sandpaper, and 2 partial 3M Sandbox cases of sandpaper. Runs great with no issues! \$900.00 (over \$1400.00 invested). Contact Keith @ [Feldbrugge@comcast.net](mailto:Feldbrugge@comcast.net) or call 651-491-9520.

**Lathe, corner clamp, dust collection, carts**. Mini Max copy lathe model # T124, 1HP, single phase. Corner clamp machine. Dust collection pipe (assorted pipe from 4" up to 14"). Material

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handling blower (3 phase, 7 1/2 HP). Cart tables for part storage (7 carts).

Reasonable offers accepted.

Contact Linda 507-876-2165 [jldahling@gmail.com](mailto:jldahling@gmail.com)

**Workbench Plans.** Plans now available for Adjustable Height Workbench with a Built in Mobile Base. Email Charlie Kocourek at [Charlie@Jack-Bench.com](mailto:Charlie@Jack-Bench.com) or visit my website [www.Jack-Bench.com](http://www.Jack-Bench.com)

**1.) Jet Mini wood lathe** with electronic variable speed, Jet stand. Like new! \$375.

**2.) Sand Flee 18-inch drum sander.** Like new! Includes fence and 3 rolls of sandpaper. \$550 (\$806 new with sandpaper and MN sales tax).

Contact Dale (Stillwater area) 651-308-9342

#### **Planes for sale:**

1) Lie Nielsen large scraping plane. Never used. \$200

2) Lie Nielsen 1 1/4" shoulder plane. lightly used. \$225

3) HNT Gordon 1 " shoulder plane. Gidgee body. Lightly used \$175 4) HNT Gordon 3/4 " shoulder plane. Ironwood body. Brass sole, lightly used \$165

5) Record T5 shooting plane. Bottom flattened. New shooting handle. \$110

6) Stanley #5 bottom machine flattened. \$110

Shipping available. Located in western suburbs of Minneapolis. Contact [markjweber@aol.com](mailto:markjweber@aol.com) 952.475.2960

#### **Lumber**

**Maple lumber.** The wood varies in size but averages 9' long, 10" wide, 1.5" thick, stacks to approximately 2'. It is rough; bark is still on some of the pieces.

Contact Jayne @763-732-2900 [jxshome@hotmail.com](mailto:jxshome@hotmail.com)

**Basswood log** about 22 inches long and 20" in diameter.

I got it about a year ago and coated the ends with white glue. I now find

that I want the space it's in more than the wood. Would anyone at the Guild be interested in it?

Contact Brian at: [brian@lightblast.net](mailto:brian@lightblast.net)

**1,380 B.F. of walnut**, 880 B.F. of cherry, 270 B.F. of maple and some oak. Mostly FAS and select grade. Selling in large bundle quantities at 60% of current retail pricing. Very nice wood at a great price!

Contact Linda 507-876-2165 [jldahling@gmail.com](mailto:jldahling@gmail.com)

**Highly figured bird's eye maple.** Mostly heartwood, 9 ft long and the width varies from 5" to over 14". It is kiln dried and has been stored either indoors or under cover, it is currently between 6.5% & 9% MC. It's surface planed, but needs more sanding. About 100 bf available. Contact Sue at [wild\\_range\\_mare@yahoo.com](mailto:wild_range_mare@yahoo.com)

#### **Services**

##### **Woodworking interns available for local businesses.**

Lifetrack Resources is a non-profit community based organization whose mission is to help children, families, and adults. They have an internship program to help provide short-term work experience for participants who have limited or no work history.

If you are a business owner this could be a great opportunity for you to help the community and to get some extra help. The intern's salary is paid by Lifetrack.

If you are interested please contact Lee Weiland at Lifetrack Resources.

**Lee Weiland** Employment Specialist

(651) 265-2359 [leew@lifetrackresources.org](mailto:leew@lifetrackresources.org)

<http://www.lifetrackresources.org/index.htm>

**Chair repair needed.** I have some dining room chairs that need repair. Please call Bob Beedle at 763-780-9662

**Mike Siemsen's School of Woodworking.** We have another great line-up of classes this year including some tool sharpening and tuning classes with Mike and a fantastic finishing class with Roland Johnson. We are also highlighting Glen Huey's class Build a 4 drawer Chippendale Chest. Classes are held in my shop on a quiet rural setting 35 miles north of the Twin Cities. The shop is heated and air conditioned for your comfort year around. Reserve your spot now! Website: [www.schoolofwood.com](http://www.schoolofwood.com) e-mail: [mike@schoolofwood.com](mailto:mike@schoolofwood.com) Phone: 651-257-9166

**Plane soles milled flat**, price ranges from \$12 for a block plane to \$40 for a #8. Sides can be milled square to the sole for \$15-\$20. Contact Chuck Pitschka at 952-935-0660, or by e-mail at

[cpitschka@mn.rr.com](mailto:cpitschka@mn.rr.com).

## **Shop Space**

**Shop space available** in a fully equipped woodworking shop, located at Hwy 94 and Vandalia, in the midway area of St. Paul. You'll share the space with other woodworkers and you'll have space for your own tools and supplies. Major equipment:

10" Powermatic tablesaw with Biesmeyer fence

16"-wide x 84"-long Invicta jointer with 4-blade cutter head

12" Powermatic planer

12" Dewalt miter saw

Bandsaw

Drill Press

Porter Cable Omni Jig for dovetails

Router table

Lots of clamps and storage

The total shop space is about 1,700 square feet. \$290/month for hobbyists (utilities included).

Price is more for professionals, and is negotiable depending on how much you'll be using the space and tools.

Contact Bob 612-298-6986

**Shop space available in Bloomington Industrial Park.** Cooperative access to floor tools, finish equipment, compressed air, sink and air conditioning.

Call Rory at 952-646-0000

## **Volunteer Opportunity**

### **Call for volunteers!**

**Membership Director.** Carole Magnuson has been the Membership director for a few years now and this past year she has also been serving as Vice President. Carole is now ready to pass the torch for the Membership position. The Membership director tracks membership renewals, sends out renewal notifications and sends out membership cards. This job is a bit easier now that we have moved to electronic media. For more information please contact Carole Magnuson at 952-881-2171 [carolemagnuson@att.net](mailto:carolemagnuson@att.net)

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## Before the Build: Concepts in Furniture Design

August 17th

Designing a beautiful piece of furniture is a process that begins long before the first piece of wood is cut. Guild member Angie Kopacek will discuss the furniture design process, from rough sketches to measured drawings to scale models. Along the way, she'll cover building a "visual vocabulary" and using it to create basic forms; composing forms to create the piece, keeping in mind proportion and balance, and using working drawings and models to refine the design. We'll also discuss how constructive peer criticism can help improve your designs. Bring drawings and photos of previous work for comments.

The meeting will be held at the Richfield Community Center in the Richfield Room.  
7000 Nicollet Avenue  
Richfield, MN 55423

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