

Chairs

Continued from Page C1

makers like Kelly, who favors the understated design.

For Kelly, it all starts in his garage, where surrounded by the tools — and sawdust — of his trade he selects the perfect piece of Eastern white pine, his material of choice.

“It’s easy to carve, I like the smell of it and it’s easy to get,” he said.

Creating a chair - from the legs to the seat to the back — is all about the angles, or as Kelly said angles of angles.

“To get the right shape, I use compound angles,” he said. “I actually use trigonometry tables to compute the angles I need, and I never thought I’d ever use trig when I took it in school.”

Chair legs and spindles are formed — or “turned” — on a mechanical lathe. The pieces are then further shaped by hand.

Sitting on a bench of his own creation, Kelly places one end of the piece of wood in a special cradle and hold the other.

Using a draw knife — a blade with a handle on each end — he patiently carves each individual piece to the desired size and shape.

He next takes a plank of his white pine and cuts two square sections. One of those sections he cuts in half and using wood glue — he reacts in horror to even the hint of using metal nails or screws — he attaches one of those halves to either side of the square he left whole.

“So each chair seat is really three separate pieces of wood,” he said. “But by attaching two on either side of the larger piece, when you look at the final product, it looks like one, solid piece.”

From there it’s a matter of assembling all the individual parts, which are held together by a combination of that wood glue and mortise and tenon joints.



JULIA BAYLY | BDN

Terry Kelly uses a combination of tried-and-true wood carving tools and patterns made of an old Fruity Pebbles cereal box to design his chairs.

“I pretty much just eyeball everything instead of actually measuring, and I’ll use a pencil to mark the top, bottom and middle of pieces I’m working on,” he said as he rummaged around his workbench looking for a pencil. “When I’m really rich, I’m going to have a pencil surgically implanted on the end of my finger.”

He takes great pains using special tools to make sure the lines and angles of his chairs are clean and exact.

“I learned early on from one of the Windsor experts to make sure my chairs are not crooked or ‘cattywampus,’ as he put it,” Kelly said. “I remember him telling me he was not speaking ‘hillbilly’ because it’s a word from Shakespeare. He was right — I looked it up.”

Kelly said he was also warned against putting too much faith in bright, shiny new tools or gizmos.

“You have to remember that, as the carver, you are the one making that tool work,” he said. “You need to develop the skills to get

the quality and end result you want.”

Kelly will spend about three weeks on one chair and is working on an eight-piece set destined for Asheville, North Carolina.

He has shipped his creations all over the country, including Texas and California and has pieces on display at Casco Bay Artisans in Portland.

Kelly sells his work through the online site Etsy and through his own website but said he wants to keep it more of a hobby than full-time profession. He also works for a local farmer.

“Just because you love something does not mean you should make it your vocation,” he said. “I don’t want to get five years down the road and be sick and tired of doing this.”

For now, he’s content to stay in his garage, his black Labrador, Forest, keeping him company, and work on one single chair at a time.

“The muses visit me every so often and spark that creativity,” he said. “Then you just have to go to work on it.”

Wood

Continued from Page C1

Working with the foresters at Huber, Emery said Winterville officials keep a close eye on lumber markets.

“Everything we sell is market driven,” he said. “If softwood prices are down, we look at our hardwoods, [and] we make sure to balance everything out so we don’t deplete the resource.”

Most of Winterville’s land is on the west side of St. Froid Lake and is open to the public for hunting, trapping, snowmobiling and all-terrain vehicle riding.

Mapleton-Castle Hill-Chapman Town Manager Jon Frederick said the 2,000 cords per year cut in his municipalities generate about \$100,000 annually each for Castle Hill and Chapman.

“We utilize those funds to offset taxes,” he said. “It’s a significant chunk of money for these two towns.”

According to Frederick, every \$2,500 in timber sales is equivalent to a 10 cent reduction on the local property tax rates.

“It works out to around four mills,” he said. “It’s a huge help for these towns.”

Like Winterville, the towns of Castle Hill and Chapman contract with a forest management company to oversee the land and timber harvests.

“We use Prentiss & Carlisle,” Frederick said. “We are managing for the long term, and it is being maintained in a manner so the public can use it, too, for recreation [because] it is truly public land.”

As far as Ralph Dwyer, Ashland’s town manager, is concerned, municipal woodlots just make good fiscal sense.

Ashland manages 4,500 acres of forest land for commercial harvesting, wildlife habitat and public recreation.

“We are making around \$50,000 a year off our woodlots,” Dwyer said. “I think it is very much a good idea to

retain this land because it is a consistent source of income for the town.”

In 1927, Maine passed legislation that defined the modern “town forest,” and it gave municipalities the authority to establish and manage the woodlots.

The law also paved the way for towns to add to their woodlot holdings by reclaiming abandoned land or land on which previous owners had defaulted on the taxes.

“By and large, if a town intends to keep its woodlots, it needs to manage them for revenue,” Santerre said. “That land can also be available for recreation.”

That two-pronged approach, she said, is what drives much of the management practices in municipal woodlots.

“If you can safely manage the land to enhance wildlife and recreational opportunities while at the same time targeting areas for commercial harvesting, it’s a win-win,” Santerre said. “You might as well be making some money while you are in there.”

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