

Getting Started

Editor's Note: *Sawdust & Splinters* has been running in "Cooperative Connections" for five years but people are just getting started in woodworking all the time. This month, Marty McGrane begins a series of articles aimed at beginning woodworkers.

I got started in woodworking shortly after my wife and I went shopping for a small, sturdy bookcase. We'd thought finding one would be easy, but we were wrong. Everything we saw was too fancy, too flimsy, too expensive... Rather than surrender outright, my frustrated wife turned to me and asked, "Could you build one?"

"Sure. And afterwards I'll perform triple bypass surgery on the neighbor's cat."

I'd never built anything, but what did I have to lose? I dug around and found a rusty old saw, a screwdriver, a carpenter's square and three or four pine boards. As I was soon to discover, even a simple woodworking project can be challenging, but eventually I came through (even though the bookcase was a little lopsided) and I gained the confidence to take on more challenging jobs. In the process, we've saved money (sometimes) and I've had a lot of fun.

The best advice I can give any beginning woodworker is this: Before you rush out to buy a bunch of tools, decide what you want to build.

"Stuff" isn't specific enough, because the things you want to build will determine the kinds of tools you will (and won't) need. In general, building furniture requires big tools; making small, ornamental craft items doesn't. Regardless, however, take comfort from the fact that you can acquire tools as your talents and ambitions grow. You won't need every power tool Norm Abrams has in his workshop and you won't have to take-out a second mortgage. Heck, for less than the cost of a bass boat you can build and equip a workshop that can output anything we ordinary woodworkers will ever have the urge, time and talent to build.

Shortly after I began working with wood, if you'd asked me why I liked it, I might have said, "It's relaxing" or "It's a great creative outlet." But by now, I've decided that, for me at least, it's about immortality. I like knowing that if the furniture I build is solid and straight and made of good materials, it should still be around a century from now. Who knows, maybe my great-grandkids will even be fighting over it. Wouldn't that be fun?

Bye for now. E-mail me at mmcgrane@iw.net.

Safety Tips

Electrical Safety Tips for Seniors

Extension Cords

- If one must be used, place it in a "no-trip zone" and never under carpets or rugs.
- Connecting multiple cords or using damaged ones may cause overheating and fires.

Space Heaters

- Keep heaters and fans at least 3 feet away from curtains and furniture.
- Never go to sleep with a space heater or heating pad turned on.

GFCIs

- To prevent shocks and death, GFCIs (ground fault circuit interrupters) should be installed anywhere water and electricity can mix. Contact a qualified, certified electrician.

Fuses

- When replacing blown fuses, always use the correct size to avoid causing a fire.

Receptacle Outlets

- Do not use outlets or switches that are hot to the touch. Call a qualified, certified electrician.

Small Appliances

- All power tools should have a three-prong plug.
- Unplug small appliances when not in use (irons, toasters, etc.)
- Do not tuck in or squeeze the wires on electric blankets.

Bulbs

- Use the proper watt bulb called for by the lighting fixture.

General Advice

- Place hearing aids next to the bed.
- If clothing is on fire, "Don't run! Stop, Drop and Roll."
- Keep smoke detectors in working order by checking monthly and replacing batteries every six months.

Source: *Electrical Safety Foundation International*

Kids' Corner Safety Poster

"When lines are on the ground, just walk around."



Hayley Leibel, 10 years old

Hayley is the daughter of Tim and Cherie Leibel, Glencross, S.D. They are members of Moreau-Grand Electric Cooperative, Timber Lake, S.D.

Kids, send your drawing with an electrical safety tip to your local electric cooperative (address found on Page 3). If your poster is published, you'll receive a prize. All entries must include your name, age, mailing address and the names of your parents.

Reader Recipes

Delightful Dips and Drinks

Toasted Almond Party Spread

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened | 1/3 cup Miracle Whip (do not use mayonnaise) |
| 1-1/2 cups shredded Swiss cheese | 1/8 tsp. nutmeg |
| 2 T. chopped green onions | 1/8 tsp. pepper |
| | 1/3 cup toasted sliced almonds |

Combine all ingredients and place in a 9-inch pie plate. Bake at 350°F. for 15 minutes or until hot, stirring once at 8 minutes. Garnish with additional sliced almonds and serve with a variety of crackers.

Arlene DeVany, Vermillion Cooperative Connections

Mock Eggnog

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| 2 quarts cold milk | 1 tsp. nutmeg |
| 1 (3 oz.) pkg. vanilla instant pudding | 1 tsp. vanilla |
| 1/4 cup sugar | 1/8 tsp. salt, optional |
| | 1 cup whipping cream |

In a mixing bowl, combine milk and pudding mix; beat at low speed for 2 minutes. Beat in sugar, nutmeg, vanilla and salt. In a separate bowl, beat whipping cream at high speed for 3 minutes or until soft peaks form. Stir whipped cream into pudding mixture. Chill, covered, until ready to serve. Sprinkle with additional nutmeg, if desired.

Suzanne England, Midland Cooperative Connections

Summer Tea

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1 quart boiling water | 1/2 cup orange juice (1/2 cup white grape juice may be substituted) |
| 6 regular tea bags | |
| 1 cup sugar | |
| 1/2 cup real lemon juice | 1 quart cold water |

Pour boiling water over tea bags. Let set 15 minutes; discard tea bags. Combine with sugar, lemon juice and orange juice, stirring well. Add cold water and serve over ice.

Lois May Wirth, Viborg Cooperative Connections

Provolone Onion Dip

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2 cups chopped Vidalia onion | 2 cups shredded provolone cheese |
| 1 cup mayonnaise | |

In a medium bowl, mix together the onion, mayonnaise and provolone cheese. Transfer to a small casserole dish. Bake at 350°F for 30 minutes or until the onions are tender and top is golden.

Cooperative Connections

Sauerkraut Dip

- | |
|--|
| 1 can sauerkraut |
| 2 (8 oz.) pkgs. cream cheese, softened |
| 2 (8 oz.) pkgs. shredded Swiss cheese |
| 2 pkgs. corned or dried beef, chopped |

Combine all ingredients in crockpot. Cook until heated through. Serve with crackers or rye party bread.

Catherine Jungwirth, Ashton Pictured, Cooperative Connections

Fruit Dip

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened | 1 small jar marshmallow crème |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|

Combine and mix well. Serve with fruit slices.

Geraldine Robinson, Frankfort Cooperative Connections

Sausage Dip

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1 lb. sausage | 1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened |
| 1 can RO*TEL Tomatoes and Green Chilies | 1 bag corn chips |

Brown and drain sausage. Add RO*TEL Tomatoes and Green Chilies and cream cheese. Cook on low heat, continuing to stir until mixed well. Serve with chips.

James Eich, Rochford Cooperative Connections

Cinnamon Cider

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| 48 oz. apple cider | 2 T. firmly packed brown sugar |
| 2/3 cup water | 2 cinnamon sticks |
| 1/3 cup sugar | 2 T. lemon juice |

Combine first 5 ingredients. Over medium heat, stir until sugars are dissolved. Bring to a boil; reduce heat to low. Add lemon juice; heat thoroughly. Remove cinnamon sticks.

Betty Littau, Winner Cooperative Connections

Please send your favorite ethnic recipes to your local electric cooperative (address found on page 3). Each recipe printed will be entered into a drawing for a prize in June 2007. All entries must include your name, mailing address, telephone number and cooperative name.