



## Issue 13, July 2021

Hi Steve R,

A lot of you reading this might be on a summer vacation right now. If that's the case, congratulations! You deserve a break and I hope you're getting some rest and relaxation. Also, if you're on holiday, why are you reading emails? Don't get me wrong, I'm flattered that you chose to open my award-winning\* newsletter, but seriously, step away from the screen. Enjoy the beach or wherever your butt is planted.

Yeeeah... we all know you're not going to unplug, so I'm going to give you the benefit of the doubt and assume you only click on emails unrelated to work while on vacation. You probably just let the work-related stuff drop down until it's no longer on the first page of your email anyway. And let's face it, there's no way you're going to click to the second page of your inbox. I mean, you're not a crazy person.

You clicked on this humble newsletter because it's hardly work-related...you *enjoy* woodworking and you probably spend an inordinate amount of time thinking about it and what you want to build next.

So I want to mention that even though you're on vacation, you can keep the woodworking part of your brain active without seeming obsessive to everyone around you. In fact, the times when you are away from your shop are great times for planning.

Do you have an idea file? If not, start one. And since we've already established that you ain't unplugging, you can set it up on your phone right now. I actually maintain two main idea files. The first one is in Google Keep. It's a great app for simply jotting down quick

ideas. Whenever a project idea hits me, I enter it in Keep right away. If I wait, I'll probably forget to add it.

Second, and probably more importantly, I have a folder set up on Google Photos just for woodworking ideas and inspiration. Sometimes, these are woodworking projects I run across online. When I see one, I'll take a quick screenshot and drop it into that folder.

But the best source of inspiration...and this is where the vacation part comes in...is just being out and about and observing the places you visit. Woodworking is everywhere. If you and your family visit a museum or gallery, take a look at the picture frames and furniture. Examine how they were constructed and take detailed pictures. (If photography isn't allowed, you'll have to go into stealth mode lol.) Historic sites are great places to find items for your idea file. Take lots of pictures and keep them in their *own* folder, don't just let them get swallowed up with the thousands of other photos you take.

Antique stores are also great places for woodworking ideas. I've run across lots of unusual furniture pieces, vintage toys and knick-knacks by just strolling around. Same with street fairs or kitchenware shops. Being on the lookout for woodworking ideas adds a whole level of interest to some mundane places. It's not usually about getting ideas for things you want to duplicate, but mostly about recording things that inspire you, or even specific parts of a project you might incorporate into your own projects.

Maybe the Tiki bar on the beach you're staying at has some great wooden decor. Ever worked with bamboo? Why not give it a shot! Years ago I took some pictures of some popsicle stick benches at Disney's California Adventure. I came home and built my own version which is still in my front yard. ([You can watch the video here.](#))



Hey, just because you're away from home, doesn't mean you can't be preparing for your next project!

Have a great month,

Steve

BTW, I wanted to thank all of you for your responses to last month's Father's Day newsletter. Hearing your personal stories was very moving. Check out some of them featured below. Let's hear it for all the dads in our lives.

Finally, I wanted to remind you that if you've been thinking about signing up for one of my [woodworking courses](#), now is a great time to get started, even if your shop time is limited or you're sitting on a beach! There's a lot of materials you can be reading and videos you could be watching in preparation for starting the course. Especially in the [Weekend Workshop](#) course, where planning your shop layout will take some consideration.

*\*Yeah right lol*

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## 5 Things About Wood You Should Know



When you first start woodworking, you're probably most interested in acquiring tools and learning how to cut and assemble wood without giving much consideration to the wood itself.

In this video, I talk about end grain, wood movement, color change and more. Understanding a few fundamental properties of wood will help you right from the start. Check it out!

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## Community Highlight

### Reactions to our Father's Day Issue

Today I want to share just a few of the dozens of responses I received after last month's issue. This is truly a wonderful community!

Love your dad email by the way. You're right. I usually get my dad some slippers or some lottery scratch cards. This year, I'm going to do the letter idea. I'm thinking I might even knock up a wooden frame and hang it for him.

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Thanks for sharing your letter with all of us. Though my own Dad is no longer with us (as a matter of fact, today is the 20th Anniversary of his death), my Dad is still very much with me. Much like your Dad, he was a strong presence in my life and in the life of our entire family.

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My dad passed in my early 30s before I could learn woodworking from him. However, when I inherited all his tools I really wanted to carry on his legacy and find a creative outlet. I'm a lifelong salesman and have always admired those who could create something with their own hands. I found you a few years ago Steve and you changed my life. Seriously! Besides my family, there is nothing in life that I have enjoyed as much or been as passionate about, as woodworking. I have to imagine there are hundreds if not 1000s of others out there that feel that same way and have you to thank.

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So very true, Steve. Speaking as someone whose Dad passed away 3 years ago, I would give anything to hear just one more of my Dad's silly, groan-worthy jokes.

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## This Month's Member Projects

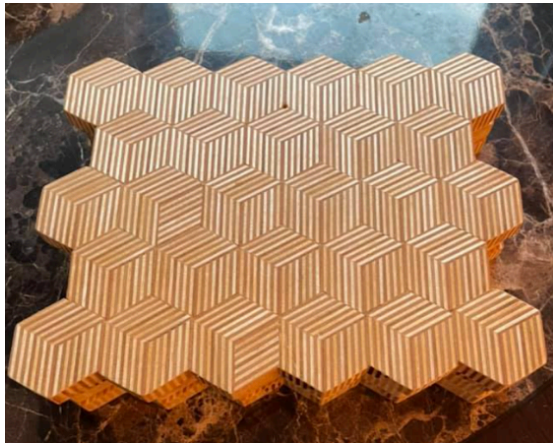
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Check out these creative projects built by a few of our [Weekend Workshop](#) and [Weekend Woodworker](#) members!



### Lovely Teak

Over the years I've seen so many amazing versions of the California Casual Patio Table from [The Weekend Woodworker](#), but I especially like Meredith's recent take! The teak is beautiful and timeless. Even the screws look perfect. Well done!



### Plywood Patterns

The edges of plywood are usually things we try to cover or hide, but sometimes they look great when featured. I love the pattern on this picture frame by Shane.

Oh, and if you're interested in my take on a plywood edge frame, here's a rather pretentious [artsy video](#) I made 8 years ago lol. (But the food coloring dye is kinda cool.)



### Savvy Table and Benches

And now that summer is officially here, let's get out of the house! This table and bench set is classic. By using leftover composite decking for the tops and 2x4s for the legs, Kara saved money and made the whole set look completely integrated with the deck. Nice!

Thanks for reading,

- Steve

P.S. If you are new this month, you can read last month's issue of Notes From the Shop [here](#).

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For Mere Mortals, 448 Ignacio Blvd. #237, Novato, CA 94949, United States