



## Issue 26, August 2022

Hi Steve R,

As economic uncertainty grows and inflation increases, it's easy to get discouraged and wonder if taking up woodworking as a hobby was such a great idea after all. The continual high cost of lumber (although it has come down a bit, so there's that) coupled with the rapid rise in the prices of tools and accessories is enough to make any woodworker depressed. Especially when you weigh those purchases with the need for essentials like food and gas. When our budgets get tighter, it's only natural that hobbies are front-of-the-line choices when cutting expenses.

Since that was probably my biggest downer of an opening newsletter paragraph, I'd like to offer an alternative, more positive perspective. 🤪 There. I added an upside-down smiling emoji. I'm not exactly sure what it means, but I feel like it works here.

I'd like to propose that woodworking is **more important now than ever**. Pursuing any hobby is therapeutic, and working within tighter constraints (i.e. less disposable income) can be mentally stimulating and provide genuine moments of self-discovery and accomplishment.

### Let's start with tools.

First of all, If you have *no* tools at all, I'd like to remind you that you can *still* set up a shop for under \$1000...blah blah blah...you know my pitch. Get my [tool list](#) and browse through it. At least get a jigsaw. You'll be surprised at the neat things you can make with a jigsaw. Also, hit up garage sales.

But I'll assume most of you reading this already have at least *some* woodworking tools and probably a designated work area.

Your first order of business will be to stop “needing” more tools. **Impose a moratorium on tool purchases.** All those tools you've been dreaming about and putting on your wish lists will still be there when the economy improves and you aren't so strapped.

Imagine you're stranded on a desert island and the only tools you have are what you've got in your shop right now. You have plenty of time to make things, but there is no Home Depot, Lowes, or Amazon delivery. You can only build stuff using what you've got. Get creative. And no, you aren't allowed to build a boat.

A couple of years ago, I got rid of my bandsaw thinking I would replace it. And you know what? I honestly haven't missed it too much. Sure, there's been times when it would have been nice to have, but for the projects I make, my jigsaw and tablesaw work fine. I know this limitation so I design and plan my projects accordingly. I don't have a jointer or tabletop planer and I manage to get by. For the most part, my tools are old and cheap, and I work within these constraints. My enjoyment of woodworking is no less than when I had those tools. In many ways, I find the hobby more rewarding. **Your woodworking is defined by you, not by your tools.**

## **Okay, lumber.**

It's gotten expensive. We all know. Allow yourself sufficient time to grumble and complain about it and then start challenging yourself to find solutions that allow you to keep making things.

What kind of lumber *can* you afford within your budget? Maybe you can explore the beauty of pine boards instead of walnut for that desk you've been wanting to build for your office.

Does that much pine seem too expensive? Scale that desk back to what you really need. Maybe it doesn't need all those drawers.

Still seem a little out of your budget? Put the desk project on the back burner for a while. Those plans will still be there waiting for you when you're ready. Make a small box. Everybody loves a small box.

What can you make with a single 2x4? There are plenty of these sorts of projects online you can check out for inspiration.

Got some scrap wood or leftover boards from previous projects? Of course, you do. Start using that stuff. If you have enough, make some shop shelves or cabinets. Who cares if the wood doesn't all match.

Start to think like an artist. Everything you make doesn't have to be practical. Let your imagination run free and come up with creative ways to use even the smallest scraps to make an art piece.

Like I always mention, check local Craigslist or Facebook listings...you can still get free lumber. Or break down free furniture for its lumber: even if it isn't solid wood, you can make stuff with that particle board. And don't forget pallets. It's time we brought back the 2015 pallet craze!

All this is to say that there are lots of ways to still enjoy your hobby without going into debt. You are going to feel like such a badass being clever enough to make things while other people sit around moping and complaining.

Have a great month!

Steve

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## Save money by going rustic

If you are thinking about saving some money by breaking apart a pallet, here's a couple videos from the wayback machine you might enjoy. They are both simple ideas that don't require much precision and look pretty cool, if you like the rustic look.

To make this first project, all you need is a drill and a jigsaw. (See I told you, at least get a jigsaw!)



This second project is a bit more advanced and requires additional tools, but it's also worth watching for the first part where I talk about choosing pallet wood and show how I break a pallet apart.



### Or get artistic.

A couple weeks ago I made a wood sculpture for my front yard using extra boards in my shop leftover from past projects. I'm on a mission to think SCRAP WOOD FIRST.



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### One Year Anniversary

I began [The WTS Podcast](#) one year ago, mostly as an excuse to chat with some of my woodworking Youtuber friends. What I never expected was how it would quickly evolve

into a podcast about so much more. The audience has grown way bigger than I ever imagined. For those of you listening to the show on a regular basis, thank you! And if you haven't listened in a while, I'd like to invite you to check it out again and let me know what you think.

The show is all about makers, artists, and the creative process. I'm inspired every time I talk to a new guest and learn about an art or craft that I knew little about. My goal with the show is to bring you conversations with people who are at the top of their fields. People like Nerdforge, the Norwegian couple who make amazing fantasy artwork and models; Dan Harmon, the creator of Rick and Morty; Scott Reeder, showing us how props are made for TV and movie productions; Jon Grim, giving us an inside look into the art and ethics of graffiti; Neil Patrick Harris, who is just beginning his woodworking journey; Diresta, Laura Kampf, Simone Giertz...the list goes on and on. Upcoming guests include an expert on explaining great art, a professional potter, and a family of DIY filmmakers.

You can listen to The WTS Podcast on any podcast app or on the WTS website at <https://www.thewtspodcast.com/>. (Also, sign up for [WTS+](#) for extra content!)

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## Community Highlight

### Best for Beginner Woodworkers

Last week my first online woodworking course, [The Weekend Woodworker](#), earned the Best for Beginners award in [Bob Villa's roundup](#) of The Best Online Woodworking Classes of 2022.

It is great for the course to be recognized, but the real reward comes each time I hear how the course has impacted the lives of its members. I love reading their stories and seeing their projects. (Which makes picking only a handful to feature each month quite difficult!)

If you're a member of The Weekend Woodworker community, thank you for your continued support. Your skills and willingness to help one another never cease to amaze me.

If you haven't yet checked out the course or one of my other courses, [Powered Up](#) or [The Weekend Workshop](#), I encourage you to join the fun.



## This Month's Member Projects

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Here are a few of the awesome projects made by course members this month.



### Fiery Flamingos

If you liked my bathroom cabinet I mentioned earlier, but think it has a little too much “rustic charm” lol, check out this gorgeous-not-rustic bathroom cabinet made by [Powered Up](#) member Frederick. Whoa...I mean check out those flamingo doors made using pyrography!

### Cutting Edge Designs

Charcuterie boards are so popular these days and it's no wonder; there are so many ways you can design them. They don't require much wood and are a great way to use up small cutoffs of hardwood you've been saving. Check out these freeform styles made by [Weekend Workshop](#) member, Claude.



### Perfect potting Bench

If you're looking for an outdoor project, here's a great potting bench from [Weekend Woodworker](#) member Jacob. Complete with a fence for hanging tools on, and a dry sink. I'm tellin' ya, gardeners *love* potting benches. Great color too!

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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