



## Issue 55, January 2025

Hi Steve r,

Happy New Year! After last month's huge issue, I'll keep this one short!

Now that the holidays are firmly behind us, we can get on with 2025. I say "firmly" so decidedly, yet I realize many people leave their Christmas decorations and trees on display long after January 1st. I'm always fascinated by people who keep the bit going into February and beyond. There's always that one dried-up tree that shows up on the curb in mid-March. Whatever brings you joy.

I love all the trappings and traditions of the holidays, but I ritually pack everything up on January 1st and dump it back into the crawlspace. There's a certain melancholy about experiencing Christmas beyond Christmas that causes me low-key anxiety.

At any rate, I love looking forward to the new year with wonder and anticipation. I enjoy setting goals and resolutions, pondering the things I intend to do, and making a list. Yes, of course, goals can and should be set at any time of the year, but the beginning of the year still feels like more of a

blank slate somehow.

In last year's New Year's issue, I talked about how I intended for my main focus of the year to be on creative development and to create more art related to woodworking. I had no idea what a journey that would lead me on, and perhaps this is the point of setting vague, open-ended resolutions.

After a few starts and stops, I discovered pyrography. It was a bit of a rediscovery, as I had dabbled in some woodburning in the past, but never took the time to fully explore it artistically. As a woodworker, I have been kind of conditioned to believe that every technique I learn and every tool I use must serve a function in the pursuit of "making" something practical. While building furniture and other pieces can have artistic expression, it has never felt purely like "art" to me. And for whatever reason, last year I felt a compulsion to explore this urge to create decorative but meaningful pieces without having likes or algorithms dictating what I create.

It turned out to be a creatively nourishing year and opened up many new possibilities. I was happy to have one of my pieces selected for a group gallery show and I'm hoping to pursue more avenues for public viewings. If you have the itch to experiment with something completely new, something that will allow your creativity to blossom, why not give it a shot? Prioritize your curiosity this year.

Interestingly, this has caused me to look at my woodworking with fresh eyes and a new understanding of what it can be. In 2025, I want to pursue woodworking projects that are both practical and speak to me. They don't need to be groundbreaking or appeal to YouTube's algorithm. If I need a new picture frame, I'll make it and shoot a video, even though I've made countless frames over the years. I believe there is value for viewers in every project because each one is unique and comes with its own challenges. I hope you'll come along as this journey continues!

If you'd like to check out my woodburning art, I've been posting them on [Instagram](#) and [TikTok](#). It's not for everyone; it draws on my love for all things dark and mysterious.

\*\*\*

January is also the time of year for my annual pitch to declutter our workshops. It's the best time of the year to get your workspace back into shape. It's accumulated a year's worth of mess, no matter how you try to keep up with it. Plus, since it's cold, you're probably not building a lot. January tends to be a pretty dead month for woodworking projects.



*Scraps are even more of a problem now that I'm woodburning. They all look like they can be burned, but really the smallest ones should just be, well, burned.*

Find places for those orphan tools and items that seem to perpetually sit on your workbench. Sweep all the surfaces with a shop-vac... sawdust settles everywhere, not just on the floor. And once again, tackle the most stressful of all shop tasks: thin out your scrap bin. Come to terms with the fact that you will never actually use that 5" long, split, 2x4 cutoff. That 8" piece of walnut is nice, but realistically, if you want to make something out of walnut, you're going to buy new lumber. And it probably won't match this scrap anyway. Or, get creative and glue all those scraps together into a collage!

Finally, if you'd like to completely overhaul your shop, or just freshen it up for the year ahead, I'd like to suggest you enroll in [The Weekend Workshop](#), my award-winning online course where you'll learn how to turn any space into an organized, efficient workshop. You'll get lifetime access to 15 unique shop projects, in-depth videos, detailed plans, and lots more.

—Steve

## Monthly Project Feature

---

In this video, I'm making a storage case for organizing my huge amount of drill bits! This case not only enhances organization and efficiency, allowing for quick access to the right bit, but also offers the opportunity for personalization to fit my specific needs. Using high-quality materials like cherry wood adds aesthetic appeal, making the case a beautiful addition to my workshop.



---

## Reader Mail

*It was so nice to read your responses to my story about my grandfather in last month's issue!*

\*\*\*

"Your story about your grandfather really hit home with me.

As my parents were parents in the 80's, they were pretty busy all the time so I got to spend copious amounts of time with my grandpa. He was the greatest man in the world. And I still stand by that fact.

He was a WW2 vet that had stories to tell about growing up in rural Illinois and owning a concrete company. I was entertained for hours by his tales. And his retirement consisted of building in his wood shop. He taught me a lot about tools and how to use them.

But he was a kind man as well. I'll never forget watching him as a 10yo in amazement when he built a huge doll house with working lights and sounds. I asked him what he was going to do with it, he told me he'd give it to a little girl at his church whose parents didn't have money for a big Christmas. I knew that it was a valuable project that he could sell for a lot of money, but he wanted to gift it to someone.

I hope I inherited some of him in my life everyday, but I'll never achieve that saintly attitude he always cared with him.

Thank you for the reminder of my favorite grandpa!" —Craig B.

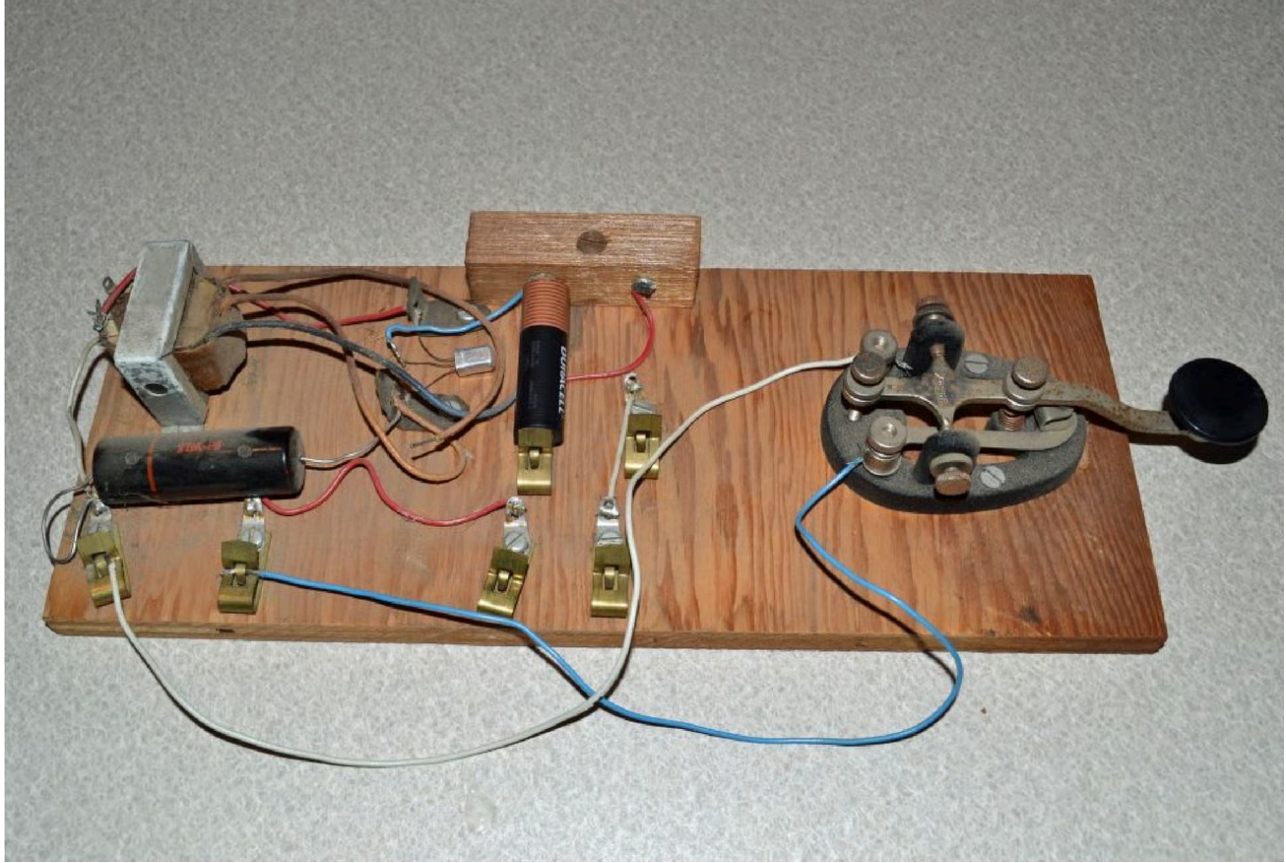
*Thank you for that lovely story, Craig. I wonder if my grandfather would have ever imagined the impact he would still have on my life so many years after his death. —Steve*

\*\*\*

"This is the one my father made for me probably in 1961. We had just moved from a rural town after Freshman year of High School to a metropolis of about 20,000, one of a group of three cities which seemed to be an area of very active HAM radio enthusiasts. Dad thought I should get involved, maybe he thought it would lead me to a career field. We did go to some HAM club meetings. I never could learn to use it very well. I think now it was hard to learn when I was both the one sending and the one receiving, maybe I need two to learn better.

You will notice every screw there is slotted, no Phillips. I put just one battery in to show how the batteries were held in, another one fits in on the right. At first, I couldn't see how that would work, but trace the wires and it does work positive to negative. Those little brass clips for the wire connections, haven't seen them in a long time, but I seem to remember them in common use, connections on the top of batteries maybe??? I did not find the headphones, if I still have them. I think the headphones had a lead like a

volt-ohmmeter that connected to the two clips in the center at the bottom of the photo; got some loose connections, have to fix and try using a volt-ohmmeter or a flashlight size bulb." —Dennis H.



*Thanks for sending this, Dennis. It's so fascinating to see these old keys!*  
— Steve

Thoughts on this month's newsletter? Got a story to tell? Just want to say hi? Drop me a line by simply replying to this email.

---

## Member Projects

---

"Steve, I wanted to share the finishing cart I made, largely inspired by yours. I have a knockdown PVC finishing booth and I needed a place to store it, and this worked perfectly. Learned a lot of what I know of woodworking from your videos over the past few years, and I keep on learning. Thanks for all you do and Merry Christmas!" —Nick C.



*What a great modification! A mobile finishing cart is so handy! —Steve*

\*\*\*

“Thank you for sharing, Steve. I'm making some squirrel chairs ala Matthew Peach and they're quite popular.” —Edison A.



*OMG that is so cute! —Steve*

\*\*\*

“Hi Steve, here are a few pictures of my Christmas creations of the past 3 years.

It was back in 2021 I saw your video of how to make the little snowmen, so I thought to make a few of them and turn them into a little profit.

Little did I know how much work it would be, so all included, I maybe made about \$1 per hour or so :-)

Anyway, I made a whole bunch of these snowmen. I think about 50 of them. In the end I needed some helpers to paint the snowmen... wife, son, mother in law, sister in law, her daughter...

I sold a few at work and to family and I was quickly sold out.



Because it was so much work to make the snowmen, I opted for a simpler design in 2022 ;-)

So the Christmas trees were born.





So, thanks to your videos, I got the idea of making some stuff, and look, now a small tradition is born. I already have an idea for next year. A reindeer and a laser machine might be involved.

To round off this mail, I would like to thank you for your creative videos. They have added only good stuff to my life, so I'm thankful for that.

Have a great Christmas, I wish you and your people all the best!"  
—Wouter L.

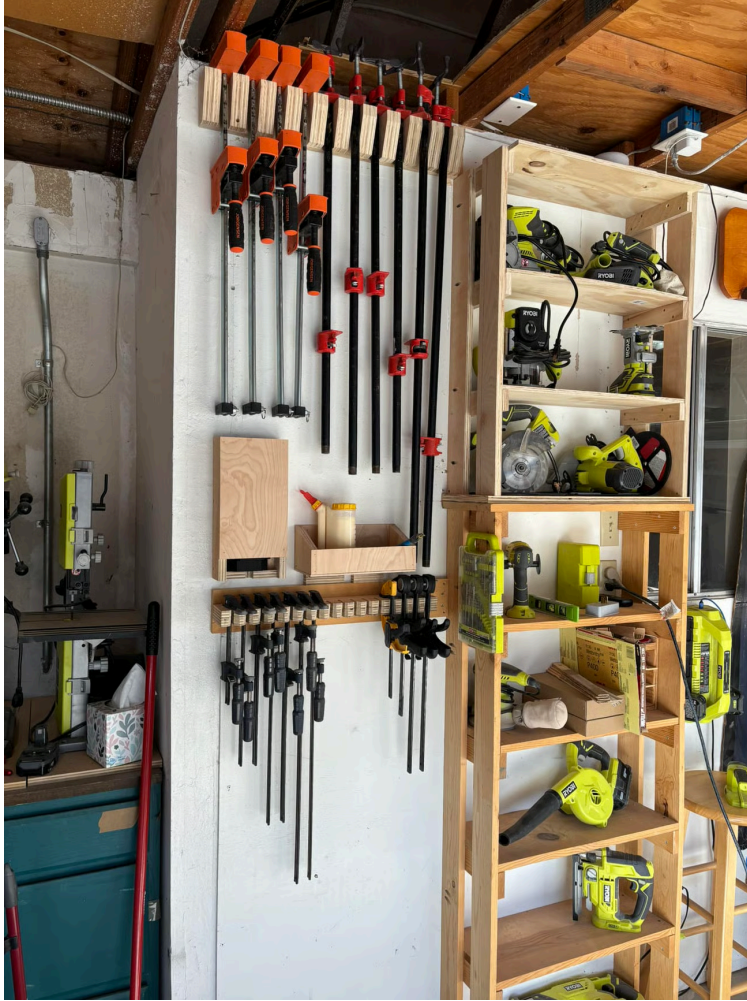
*Thanks for showing us your work Wouter! Some great ideas for next Christmas! —Steve*

*Looking for some Shopcation project ideas? Check out these awesome projects from some of our [Weekend Woodworker](#) members!*

"New to this group, just started taking Steve's courses in September as a brand new beginner with zero skills. Made the BMW, RIO, Mitre Saw Station, lumber cart and lumber storage rack thus far. Been a blast getting out and doing this stuff. Just finished this project, and before anyone asks the only real answer I have is because.... Reasons? Because I could. Sure got a lot of reps in on the saw with this project though." —Chris A.



"HIGHLY recommend the clamp storage rack video. I got rid of a TON of scrap wood and now have a very usable (and aesthetically pleasing) space for my clamps! Hope you are all having a great weekend!" —Daniel H.



***Have you made something you want over a quarter million people to see in next month's newsletter? Just hit reply and send me a pic.***

---

Can't get enough WWMM? Subscribe on [YouTube](#) or connect on [Instagram](#) or [Facebook](#).

Interested in previous issues of this newsletter? Check them out [here](#).

Looking to share this newsletter with others? Have them subscribe [here](#) or share this [web version](#) of the newsletter.

Sent to: team@theweekendwoodworker.com

[Unsubscribe](#)

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