

Students learn to build the old-fashioned way

By Craig Rullman
Correspondent

On April 21, three busloads of fourth- and fifth-graders from Cascades Academy descended on Sisters Country to learn traditional woodworking skills of the American Revolutionary era.

The students started at the Fir Street Pavilion, where Kris Calvin, owner of Earthwood Timber Frame Homes in Sisters, invited the students to study the construction of the pavilion, and then asked them how it was different from other buildings nearby. The students quickly pointed to the wood pegs that complete the joinery, and Chris invited them to keep that in mind as they worked through the various stations later in the morning.

The Cascades students are currently studying the American Revolutionary era, following an “experiential learning” model. Spanish teacher Hattie Tehan highlighted the importance of getting the students to actively participate in the methods and techniques they were taught.

“This gives them a hands-on experience in what the trades looked like at the time,” she said.

For their Revolutionary-era instruction, Cascades teachers Rose Moison and Autumn Elkins divide the students into miniature villages. Each student will then

serve the village by inhabiting a role, such as apothecary, blacksmith, millner, or a carpenter. At the end of the teaching block, all of the villages come together and create a market, where the wares they have produced as villagers are displayed and available in a small market.

“I think it’s important for the students to develop an appreciation for how things were done...”

Back at the Earthwood shop, Chuck Tucker, a traditional woodworker who learned his skills while stationed in England with the Air Force, displayed a Sackback Windsor chair he had built using traditional tools and methods, modeled directly after the chairs used by the founders and still on display at Constitution Hall in Philadelphia.

Chuck then demonstrated how to build chair legs, starting with a round of green hardwood. Using traditional tools, Chuck split the round, then showed the students how to use a traditional shaving horse using both a drawknife and a spokeshave.

The prepped wood was then ready for the treadle lathe, and Tucker showed the students how a carpenter of the era would have turned

the legs, pumping the treadle and precisely controlling the depth and angle of his cuts.

The students wondered aloud how long it would take to finish a chair. Tucker said, “It takes me about 40-50 hours, but at the time, they would probably have been done by now.”

Watching the progress, fourth-grader Bridger French said, “This is pretty cool. I’m surprised you can make such beautiful pieces of furniture with such simple machinery.”

The students were then brought outside where Calvin displayed period saws, chisels, and mallets, before demonstrating traditional techniques for creating mortis-and-tenon joinery. After the demonstration, and a safety brief, the students were invited to get to work finishing the joinery by sawing, chiseling, and using a traditional brace, or drill, to complete the work.

Calvin told *The Nugget*, “I think it’s important for the students to develop an appreciation for how things were done when they didn’t have what we have today, to start asking themselves ‘what’s holding stuff together? How are things connected?’”

Dennis Mills, also a traditional woodworker and member of the Central Oregon Woodworkers (centraloregonwoodworkers.net), who was on hand to assist in the demonstrations and instruction, emphasized the importance



PHOTO BY JERRY BALDOCK

Chuck Tucker works with traditional tools.

of “understanding what you can do with woodworking by hand, and to see that the quality of work was as good or better than what we have today.”

The students, clearly enjoying themselves, and

eager to participate, were broken into groups, with each group taking turns at the treadle lathe, the shaving horse, and using the various vintage tools, connecting directly with the materials, the tools — and with history.

YEAR-ROUND FIREWOOD SALES
KINDLING
SISTERS FOREST PRODUCTS
541-410-4509
SistersForestProducts.com

Music Night!
Every Friday through June 3
from 7 to 9 p.m. at Cork Cellars!
Sponsored by: **Metabolic Maintenance**

CORK CELLARS
— LOCALLY OWNED —
350 WINES
Plus Craft Beer
Outdoor seating!
Memorable Lunches & Dinners
CHEF-CREATED SAT. DINNER SPECIAL:
Tastes of Italy:
Spaghetti, Meatballs & Pasta Primavera
Call for reservations,
541-549-2675
Tues-Sat 12-9 p.m.
391 W. Cascade Ave.
541-549-2675

SPRING STYLE EVENT
THE MOST EFFICIENT WAY TO BUY WINDOW COVERINGS. NOW WITH MORE ENERGY-EFFICIENT SOLUTIONS.
ASK HOW YOU CAN LOWER YOUR RECURRING ENERGY EXPENSES BY UP TO 30%!
Products vary in their energy efficiency, inquire with your Budget Blinds Style Consultant.
Get 25% off, plus a rebate up to \$250*
Instant 25% off, plus a \$250 rebate from the manufacturer
Schedule your FREE in-home consultation today!
541-788-8444 www.BudgetBlinds.com
CCB Licensed #197715 | Bonded | Insured | 30+ Years Experience

SCALE HOUSE presents
HIGH FIBER
arts symposium
... put more fiber in your diet.
MAY 13 + 14 • 2016
BEND • OREGON
WORKSHOPS • FASHION SHOW • FIBER ARTIST PANEL
POP-UP MARKETPLACE • KEYNOTE: JEANNE CARVER
TICKETS ON SALE NOW!
www.scalehouse.org/highfiberarts
f /highfiberartssymposium