

Labor of love will go to the auction

By CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK Post Staff

SHAVERTOWN - The beautiful workshop bench Ed Crafts built started out as a birdhouse. "Would you believe that," says long-time business friend and acquaintance Joe Stager. "That's right," says Ed. "Joe asked me to make a birdhouse or bird feeder for the auction. I'd made some cedar garden boxes the year before. But no good plan came around for a birdhouse and besides I didn't think there were many homeless, starving birds in the Back Mountain."

Friends like Stager and Bill and Joanne Runner encouraged Ed to make the workbench, but he also admits to a love for his Back Mountain community as the final inspiration for his labors.

Ed's heirloom bench actually has been in the making for years. A wholesale lumber company manager by profession and amateur woodworker by avocation, he began salvaging materials years ago. He points out that all the wood in the workbench is salvaged or recycled. More than eight different woods make up the piece, including birch, beech, maple, redwood, Douglas fir, southern yellow pine, eastern white pine, and three unidentified tropical hardwoods.

A similar prototype for the piece is in the Crafts' garage, Ed having incorporated an antique vise of his grandfather's in a similar workbench that he uses. But the new workbench, made expressly for the 1999 Back Mountain Millennium Auction, is definitely an heirloom piece, "something a father could pass on to his son" says Ed Crafts.



Ed Crafts isn't sure how long it took him to make this beautiful wooden workbench, but it surely won't last long when it goes over the block at the 53rd annual Back Mountain Memorial Library Auction in July.

POST PHOTO/CHARLOTTE BARTIZEK

The workbench has a beautiful laminated butcher block top varnished with tung oil, and a 9-inch woodworkers vice that opens to 10 inches with a quick release mechanism. It has 8 drawers and two cupboards, the drawers being all hand-doweled. It disassembles into three main pieces for easy transport, a useful feature since it is rather heavy. There is an open-ended tool shelf below the table area.

"I'd put it my dining room says Jean Hillard," another friend of the Crafts, who have lived in Shavertown for 14 years.

Ed is not quite sure how long it took to complete the workbench. "Oh, I don't know exactly how long. I'd plane a piece of wood

then run in the house and watch some TV. But it was quite a while. You can't buy a workbench like this at Home Depot or Lowe's, though I think you can get them from Scandinavia," noted Ed.

Men will imagine themselves working at this glorious bench, which measures 23 1/2" by 66 1/2" by 33 1/2" inch high, creating other wooden works of art. Women will wonder how the piece might fit into the dining room as a buffet. (It has a nice space on top that would hold eight wine bottles and the shelf below would nicely hold plates, napkins and silverware.) Whatever your fancy, this unique workbench will be a timed item at this year's Back Mountain Memorial Library Auction, July 8-11.

Summer camps for kids in grades 1-8 at Penn State

In addition to popular sports camps (soccer, basketball, golf, and volleyball), Penn State Wilkes-Barre Summer Youth Camps offer a focus on science and technology. The camps provide challenging and enriching activities for students in kindergarten through eighth grade. Hands-on activities, experiments and projects geared to each grade level are designed to spark interest in science and technology. This year exciting partnerships with local industries will add a new dimension to the program.

Penn State Wilkes-Barre will partner with Procter & Gamble and Commonwealth Telephone Enterprises in July for a week of "hands-on" learning and fun. Kids in grades 5-8 will see trees become paper at Procter & Gamble Paper Products. Engineers from the company will be on campus to show the campers how they can make their own paper. Later in the week, they will travel to Mehoopany to tour the facility. The children will participate in consumer testing and learn about paper recycling.

They will also visit Commonwealth Telephone Enterprises where they will take part in real-life, on-the-job instruction in Commonwealth's "training trailer" just as a new employee would be required to do. They will discover how today's technology works and what the future has in store.

Also included in this hi-tech camp is a tour of Penn State Wilkes-Barre's state-of-the-art engineering labs to see real technology at work. The kids will get "hands-on" experience in computer-aided drawing, experience with circuit boards and visit a biomedical laboratory for a close-up

look at hospital equipment and how it works.

Electronic Lab Workshop (grades 3-6) offers over 30 electronic gadgets kids can build themselves (or with a little help from the instructors). Projects such as an electronic motorcycle, police siren and automatic night-light will increase their knowledge of electricity and the electronics kit may be kept and re-used.

For mystery buffs, Crime Lab Capers lets campers (grades 1-4) work together as forensic scientists to solve the crime of the century. They will investigate the crime scene and perform a variety of tests, including chromatography, finer printing and mystery powders to identify the suspects and prove their case.

K'Nex for Kids (grades 4-6) unleashes the imagination with create-and-play activities on the computer. Students design their own creations in the computer lab and then bring them to life using 400 piece K'Nex sets.

Extended care can be provided before and after the camps for the convenience of working parents. Lunch is served daily through the campus food service or campers may bring their own.

Limited round trip bus transportation is available during the weeks of July 5, 12 and 19 for campers traveling to and from Kingston and Wilkes-Barre. Seating is on a first come/first serve basis.

For more information or to receive a full Summer Youth Program brochure, call Jennifer Youngman, Continuing Education Penn State Wilkes-Barre, at 675-9220 or e-mail: wbce@cde.psu.edu.

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