

Wooden Boat Show & Summer Solstice: June 20-22

Though the weather hasn't indicated that summer is coming anytime soon, the calendar suggests otherwise and Boat Show appears to be right around the corner! We'll have all the usual favorites: chowder, puppets, doughnuts and mimosas, great speakers and a boat parade. Please come demonstrate on Friday and Saturday! Let me know if you'll be able to make it: I have a growing list but there's room for plenty more folks to join us. You don't need to be here both days if that doesn't work for your schedule. Friday noon-Saturday 5pm.

Instructor Gathering: Sunday, June 22 9AM: RSVP Requested

We will continue the tradition of an informal social gathering of instructors on Sunday morning for coffee, mimosas and conversation. We will follow up with the Steambent Brunch: you are our guest, please RSVP and let us know if you'll need additional tickets (\$15). Please plan to come!

Instructor-in-Residence: There are already 10 folks signed up to be our "Instructor in Residence," crafting under the timber frame on the Commons and sharing the stories of North House and craft with all who pass by. We love having you here: I have 4 more spots available this year. We are happy to provide housing, you are welcome to sell your wares (just 10% to us) and we would love to have you teach a 2 to 4 hour course to help supplement your time here. Travel stipend available as well. Please email or call if interested: typically, residents are here Thurs-Sunday, but flexibility is possible!

- Thursday, August 14-Sunday, August 17
- Thursday, August 21-Sunday, August 24
- Thursday, September 18-Sunday, September 21
- Thursday, September 25- Sunday, September 2

Report from the Instructor Retreat

We were so happy that several instructors were able to join us for a festive and enriching Instructor Retreat last month. Rich in conversation, craft and camaraderie, the whole weekend was a wonderful reflection of the commitment of all of you to the mission of North House. It was a joy to host you here on campus! Wondering what you missed? In a nutshell, here are some reflections from the "official" conversations. You'll have to ask around about the late-night conversations.

- Friday afternoon: We shared lunch and introductions. We covered a few "interesting" numbers: pre-booked enrollment for 2014 is looking very strong.
- Friday night: Should we do a book to celebrate our 20th Anniversary? Yes it seems is the answer. What should it include? People, places, stories, instruction...all of the above! It does seem that grant funding will be a required part of the equation. In the meantime, please send your ideas and books your way. We're collecting fuel for the project.
- Saturday lunch: We had a robust discussion of the facilities here on campus: what works well, what are the challenges and what are the possible visions for the future? Everything from floating classrooms to tool storage to yurt classrooms was put on the table. We're digesting and will incorporate this feedback into the Facility Study. We also discussed the possibilities of shifting more coursework to weekdays to improve overall use of the facility: would students still come? Also discussed was the need for some training on how instructors can support fund-raising and development efforts
- Saturday pizza bake: Lots of pizza, interesting work at the Show and Share (no fashion show this year though!) and a screening of a very interesting film about Popcorn Sutton.
- Sunday Morning: We wrapped up the weekend with reflection on what's next: which tools are needed, the creation of a safety committee, what spaces can be shaped and created on campus, and what the retreat should look like in 2015

Also, new on campus thanks to the hard work of many instructors during the Retreat: stacked handle utensils for use at pizza bakes, carved spoons, spoon racks, serving boards and a growing collection of wooden bowls for use on campus so students can experience the pleasure of using handmade goods. Thanks to all who donated time and materials! If you have ideas or feedback on any of these topics, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

2015 Instructor Retreat

We will host another instructor retreat on APRIL 8-12, 2015. We will offer lead-in coursework on Wed-Thurs and structured meetings, discussions, Try It sessions and more on Friday and Saturday. Our (possibly crazy) goal? 60 instructors present (that's half of you!). We'll line-up housing, provide some meals and tuition-free coursework well in advance, so please mark your calendars.

Classroom Equipment

We're adding to our classroom resources: new already this year are a drum carder, 8 new spring pole lathes, a Stop Saw table saw, a planer, a jointer, 25 cushions for chairs, 12 new high-intensity portable lights, additional jewelry supplies, a kitchen mirror, spinning wheel, stockpots and sauté pans, and new dust collection system for the Milling Shop and Red Building. We've amassed quite a list of other desirables during the Retreat, but please add your thoughts to the mix-- what resources would make a significant difference in your teaching? We can't do it all, but we're making progress and lists are helpful for planning.

RECENT COMMENTS FROM STUDENT EVALUATIONS

- I was amazed at how much I learned in a short period of time. Awesome!
- Amazing blacksmith facility
- ... was an excellent instructor and related well to all skill levels. Very encouraging and helpful. He is worth his weight in gold. Keep him around!
- This was truly a fabulous experience!! I hope to take many future classes here and with the instructor.
- I had the most wonderful time EVER!!!
- That the instructor knows his material is an understatement. Very good about keeping focused on getting started. Left all of us longing for more.
- The North House helped set me on a path to change some things in my life...things that I've always had interest in, but will start and continue to develop from this point on!
- I really enjoyed the course, extra lectures, farm tour and the community pizza. It is great to feel like you are part of a movement! The instructors give you the sense that, rather than just taking a course from them, you are entering into a dialogue and a community of ongoing experimentation and creation.
- Hands on is great, at least for me. It is the best way I have to learn. I also like to do some research prior to taking a class to be able to ask informed questions. Most topics are accessible on line to read up on.
- Listening to the stories and history while we worked was just what the mind needs while the body works. Well rounded!!!!
- Not only are the classroom activities great but the social aspect during and even more so after are priceless. All walks of life, all different socioeconomic statuses and of course all age groups. NHFS is all inclusive and quite diverse.
- [The instructor] really knows his craft. He does a nice job of balancing the technical and artistic aspects of bowl turning.
- Everybody at North House, including staff and guests were so friendly and happy...what a great feeling!

TEACHING TECHNIQUES we've heard good feedback about...

As staff, we get to see all of you in your element and observe a wide array of approaches to teaching. Here are a few ideas we've heard positive things about from students and other instructors.... Feel free to share your own ideas in future updates.

Tours: some instructors are taking a break in their courses and touring campus, pre-arranging with other instructors on campus to have a casual "show and share" atmosphere. Obviously, not all courses can accommodate this in the schedule, but when it works, it seems to really enhance the sense of community.

Coffee Breaks: scheduled during class, different from just taking a break as the class stays together and has discussion. Especially useful in classes with lots of independent power-tool work that don't have as much opportunity for chatting.

Pre-Course Communication: many instructors are using email to reach out to students ahead of time to help shape their expectations. This is certainly not a requirement, but we're happy to provide contact info if you want to try this.