

INSTRUCTOR UPDATE: WINTER 2014

SCHEDULING: It's that time again. The Spring/Summer catalog will go "live" on March 1. This means I would like to schedule your summer/fall coursework by **February 4**. Call, email or stop by. Please note, I'll be out of town Jan 20-26.

TRENDS to CONSIDER:

Weekday momentum: Often, we're noticing that classes offered on Thursday-Friday do just as well (or better!) than our more traditional Saturday-Sunday centric-model. This means more students in the classrooms more days of the week and decreases space pressure on weekends. We invite you to think about utilizing those weekdays if you are interested: perhaps add a one-day Thursday class to your Fri-Sat course OR teach Thurs-Fri and Sat-Sun? We're open to ideas.

Half-Day and One Day Add-Ons: Particularly in the summer, we have an opportunity for "last-minute" registrations from students who just arrived in Grand Marais and would like to add something to vacation plans. Ideally, an introductory experience for these folks will help "convert" them to longer, more educationally rich experiences in the future. If you have ideas about something you could offer while you are here that might fit the bill, let us know.

PASSINGS: It is with deep sorrow that we share news of the recent passing of two members of the North House family. Raku instructor and beloved Grand Marais artist Kristi Downing passed December 5 after a brief recurrence of cancer. She taught Raku courses at her home studio for over a decade. Her laughter, spunk and creativity will be sorely missed.

Guest Instructor and general inspiration Bill Copperwaite died November 26 in a car accident near his home in Maine. Bill, author of [A Handmade Life](#), last visited North House in 2008 and is revered for his writing, his inspiring lifestyle and commitment to simplicity and honoring craft traditions.

INTERN NEWS: From the "where are they now" file, the 2013 interns have moved on. Angela recently accepted a position at Urban Boatbuilders as a boatbuilding instructor and program administrator. We're so proud and glad she's headed back to Minnesota! Lindy is expected to return north to pursue all things craft; details are forthcoming we hope. We can't seem to get rid of Matt (kidding! Why would we want to?) who continues to work part-time as the Volunteer and Classroom Coordinator here at North House and can also be found patrolling Lutsen Mountains and thinking about sailing.

On Feb 3, three new fresh faces will join us: Austin Kennedy, Mary Cowen and Emily Derke. Austin Kennedy is currently living in Minneapolis, MN and due to finish Bachelor of Science in Recreation, Parks and Leisure Studies – University of Minnesota Twin Cities. She's no stranger to the non-profit world, having worked with Worldwide Orphanage Relief Coalition and even established a 501(c)3 non-profit organization to continue work with vulnerable children in Ghana, West Africa. Emily Derke is currently living in Duluth, MN. She has a passion for learning traditional craft skills. While attending Anoka Ramsey Community College she focused on ceramics study and immersed herself in the practice of basketry while living as an intern at the Ancient Arts Center in Alsea, Oregon. Mary Cowen has recently returned to the States after traveling in Ireland volunteering with WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms). She has a Bachelor of Arts in Women's Studies, Minor in Spanish - University of Minnesota Duluth. Mary has focused her craft study on the art and practice of felt making, working closely with North House instructor, Mary Reichart.

STAFF NEWS: Come March, the smiling face welcoming you to North House will no longer be our beloved Mica Harju. Mica will be leaving North House to start a trail-building business with her husband Adam. The flexible schedule will allow her to spend more time out West with her family and pursue her interests in cycling, operating heavy machinery and being outdoors while still living in Grand Marais. We wish her the best and will miss her terribly. Watch the e*news for an announcement regarding this open full-time position at North House soon. As for the rest of us, we're managing as best we can, given the Mica-sized hole in our hearts. Of note, we'll also be hiring another part-time seasonal office assistant/special events assistant as well.

WORK STUDY PROGRAM: The next time someone tells you that they'd love to take a class at North House but they can't afford it, please tell that person about the Extended Earn & Learn program, a.k.a "work study." Last summer, more than a dozen people spent an extended period of time working on campus (usually 4-5 days) keeping the bathrooms clean,

the dishes washed, helping out at pizza bakes and with larger campus improvements (behold the bike rack!). In exchange, they earned a nest egg of tuition dollars; an average of nearly \$200 per person. It was so successful that we're increasing the number of slots available from April-October 2014. Did we mention that we provide free camping? Applications are available online. We hope that this provides an opportunity for folks (especially young folks) to access North House coursework. Spread the word!

INVITATION to LIVE CRAFT: Last summer, 8 of you served as "Instructors in Residence," crafting under the timber frame on the Commons and sharing the stories of North House and craft with all who passed by. And boy, are people curious about those two subjects. We loved having you here: please come again this year. June-October, especially on Thurs-Fri-Sat. We are happy to provide housing, you are welcome to sell you 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.

CALENDARS: MARK 'EM

- **April 10-13: Instructor Project Sessions & Retreat**
- **April 17-19: Volunteer & Service Learning Weekend**
- **May 3-5: Northern Sustainability Symposium**
- **June 20-22: Wooden Boat Show & Summer Solstice Festival**
- **June 22: Instructor Gathering, 9 am**
- **September 11-14: Unplugged XIII**

INSTRUCTOR RETREAT: Continuing on with the success of last year's inaugural retreat, we're hoping you'll plan to join us this April 10-13. Details are still coming together, but here's the general plan: Thursday and Friday will be project sessions (building tool storage for the Red Building, possible lathe construction and a sewing bee). Friday night we'll gather for dinner and program of sorts, Saturday morning will be coffee and conversation about a variety of topics: the 20th anniversary, an apprentice program, and other meaty subjects. Saturday afternoon will include Try It sessions, followed by a pizza bake and good company. Sunday morning, sweet treats and dreaming for the year ahead. Like last year, we can make arrangements for lodging and will provide several meals. RSVP form with all the details coming soon. Hope to see you there!

HIGHLIGHTS FROM COURSE EVALUATIONS 2013

- "This place is magical, I want to live here at the school! The campus is beautiful, so well-made and sturdy and full of handwork. I love that it's small and vibrant, the "vibe" of staff and teachers is fantastic. Thanks to everyone! Keep it up! Hurrah!"
- "I have taken many cooking classes in the US and abroad, this class was the BEST!"
- "... is a wonderful instructor, worked very hard to present information in multiple ways: verbal, visual, kinesthetic, super helpful"
- "COMMUNITY! I FEEL it here. It's rich and full. It made me worthy, wanted, accepted, comfortable able to learn to grow and to share"
- "my advice is to keep doing what you are doing, staying focused on your mission. thanks so much for all you do!"
- "I appreciate and enjoy the environment at North House. The teaching staff is always well qualified and fit the ambiance of this place. It is a joy to come here."
- "All of the teachers were extremely generous with their time and expertise and made me feel welcome. Their sincere friendliness was an important part of the learning process."
- "[the instructor] gave us individual safety assistance as each us moved from one piece of equipment to another. It was so much more effective than a general safety lesson to the whole group."
- "[the instructor] demonstrated unflagging optimism without being phony"
- "I think NHFS is fantastic and my concern is that it maintain its standards. I notice some students and many tourist/visitors view it as "quaint." I really appreciate NHFS as a place where craft is taken seriously...it's a fun

place but the standards are high. I worry that NH will begin to cater to the “Quaint.” One of my classmates wished that there were disposable cups available for the coffee...I really hope that things like that are never considered and that the handmade standards stay intact.”

- “I am covered in shavings. I feel myself slowing down. It’s good to be back at the NHFS. I needed this.”
- “...is a model NHFS educator- very patient and not too pushy for an end product—focused on the journey. Great class.”
- “The instructor brought several hand planes and drawknives for us to use. I really appreciated his generosity in sharing these tools. They were all beautifully sharpened and adjusted and taught me a lot about hand tools that I’d either forgotten or never knew. Thanks!”
- “It is so satisfying to make something useful with your very own hands and to do this with a nice group of people makes it even more enjoyable!”
- “It was such a refreshing place to be. The staff were very supportive and open to different ideas and philosophies. You really felt like being there was something that you would cherish for many years. Thank you for a wonderful experience!”
- “...is an excellent instructor. He shows what we are going to do, shows the final project and explains how were going to get there. He demonstrates at the various stages of the project and then watches to make sure the correct thing is happening. He encourages, and gives feedback, and constructive feedback when needed.”

Some Areas for Improvement we heard about from Students in 2013 and what we’re doing about it...(in no particular order)

- *Chairs are uncomfortable.* We’re working on sewing a whole bunch of cushions available for students to use to supplement their padding. This is a band-aid solution at best, but a start hopefully.
- *Please get a mirror in the kitchen over the teaching station.* We have finally found a design for this that we like and looks like North House and not like some fancy cooking show. Work in progress.
- *The tools I was asked to bring weren’t used/ I wasn’t asked to bring what I needed.* Double check the tools you REQUIRE for accuracy on our website. When I send the course profiles, it will also include the optional tools.
- *The course was too short.* Always a challenge to find the right mixture of adequate but not excessive time and match it with appropriate and enticing tuition. Several instructors have been adding 2-3 hour evening sessions preceding their classes to get some of the introductory work accomplished for a minimal tuition increase.
- *The other class near us was too noisy.* Hand tools and power tools are tough. Hopefully our initiative to schedule more weekday classes can help alleviate the space pressure that can create these situations.
- *Lighting was not good enough for the work being done.* We think we’ve found some great high intensity lights that are reasonably portable and can supplement the table lamps. We have a sample coming in the mail: stay tuned.
- *NH needs another FILL IN THE BLANK (table saw, drill press, stand mixer, the list goes on).* Another \$20,000 has been earmarked in the budget to continue improving classroom resources. Last year saw significant acquisitions for the kitchen and blacksmith shop as well as two new wood stoves and the drastically improved kitchen area for pizza bakes and students in the Blue Building.
- *Please get stools in the kitchen.* We’re on a quest to find/build stools (with backs!) that are comfortable, compact and durable. Ideas?
- *Summer walk-through traffic was distracting.* We’re improving our signage and rope barriers that can be used to designate non-public areas and we’re adding additional days of Live Craft demonstrations on the Commons, a great way to engage summer traffic without creating distraction.