

Making shavings

May 1, 2020

This picture, taken a couple of days ago might give you the impression that I'm hard at work creating my next piece of furniture. I'm tempted to allow that idea to persist. Hm-m-m... Naw, honesty prevails. The fact is that this was taken after a five minute sojourn in my shop during the middle of the work day.

I'd found my mind wandering as it often does during this time of quarantine, to the extent that I wasn't getting much work done. This happens with disappointing frequency as I wonder what the future will bring. When it does, I've found that even a few moments in my workshop clears my mind and allows me to return, refreshed to my paid endeavors.

The shavings you see here did not come from some precious plank of cherry or walnut or even ash. No, they come from the piece of construction-grade 2x4 I keep chucked up in my bench vise for such moments. Pulling down a Number 4 or 5 from my bench plane till, setting the blade for a fine shaving and then proceeding to make shavings is more relaxing to me than any other pursuit. The sn-n-n-nick sound of the blade doing its work, the translucence of the shavings, the way they curl back above the cap iron set me at ease.

As I said above, it doesn't take long. By the time my breathing begins to change with the exertion my mind is reset and I can rejoin my plan for the day.

Having a nice piece of furniture or a turned or carved creation to show folks is nice. But the real joy in working wood is in the interaction between me and the wood.

