

# World Class Instructors

## Welcome New 2024 Instructors



### Alexander Grabovetskiy

MASTER WOOD CARVER

SPECIALIZATIONS: Classical Wood Carving, Carving in Grinling Gibbons Style, Architectural & Ornamental Carving

Alexander Grabovetskiy was recognized as the 2012 International Wood Carver of the year, and his piece Wall Decoration was awarded first place. His work utilizes the same approaches used for centuries by master woodcarvers, including techniques employed by Grinling Gibbons. In 2015 Alexander Grabovetskiy was Editors' Choice to be Awarded with Woodworking Excellence in category: Turnings, Carvings & Objets d'Art by Popular Woodworking Magazine. Grabovetskiy was born on July 4, 1973, in the Russian town of Dimitrovgrad. His grandfather taught him basic woodcarving techniques at six-years old, and at 16 he was taken on as an apprentice by renowned carver Vladimir Tokarev. Due to his faith and his refusal to enlist in the Soviet Armed Forces, Grabovetskiy was imprisoned by the Soviet authorities. He was freed after two years as part of an Amnesty International campaign for prisoners of faith incarcerated by the USSR. In prison he began a business making furniture and kitchen sets, and finding no work upon his release at the age of 21 years, he continued on to run his own woodworking enterprise. In 1996, Grabovetskiy immigrated as a political refugee to the United States together with his wife Nadia and their 10-month-old son. The woodworking and custom home building business that he established in Goshen, Indiana, Aalmark LLC, employed a number of expert craftsmen who were also Christian refugees from the former Soviet Union. He currently works in South Florida.



#### Architectural Woodcarving

Tuition: \$1,000

Dates: June 3-7, 2024



Approved  
Continuing  
Education

#### Program Description:

An Exciting Journey into the World of Wood Carving! In every piece of wood lies a story waiting to be revealed. Begin with a vision, embracing the depth of 3D imagination. Navigate the intricacies of the grain, wielding tools that are both sharp in edge and purpose. In the dance of carving, it is the blend of age-old design and modern mastery that crafts true brilliance.



### Katrina Tompkins

FURNITURE DESIGNER & INSTRUCTOR

SPECIALIZATIONS: Furniture Design & Education

Katrina Tompkins is a furniture designer, maker, educator and advocate for craft. She studied at the School of Craft and Design, Sheridan College (2006-2009, A.Dip.) and OCAD University (2015-2019, M.Des). She has spent time apprenticing in the studios of renown makers Michael Fortune (Ontario) and Mike Paterson (Newfoundland), ever-learning at craft institutions Anderson Ranch (Colorado) and Haystack Mountain School of Craft (Maine). Katrina established her studio practice Finefolk in 2019, designing and producing wood goods for both residential and commercial projects. Katrina is as intrigued with Outport furniture as she is committed to contemporary regionalism.

#### Finefolk Chair (Modern Stick Chair)

Tuition: \$600

Dates: Apr 20-21, 2024

#### Program Description:

Spend a weekend with maker and designer Katrina Tompkins building her Finefolk Chair. This class is a mix of traditional and contemporary chair making techniques that will give you speedy and strong results. This 3 legged vernacular-inspired chair has a unique style backrest and some hidden joinery to attach the back post. After two full days you will bring home a chair to last generations! Finish or paint will be applied by the student on their own time after the course. These stools were used as task chair, with three legs made them stable for uneven ground found in a shed, stage, or even outdoors. The collection presents an appreciation of the 'super normal' with quiet aesthetics that prioritize utility and tranquility desirable in modern urban life. The Finefolk Chair is study on its odd legs, and ready to provide support as needed.







## Blake Loree

WINDSOR CHAIR MAKER

SPECIALIZATIONS: Windsor Chairs, Custom Furniture

Blake Loree is a maker of Windsor chairs and other custom furniture in his timber frame shop in Waco, Texas. Each piece is individually crafted using a wide array of traditional hand tools as well as a limited number of machines as needed. Blake's interest in woodworking goes back as far as he can remember. When he was old enough to walk, he would follow his Grandpa around the shop and be lost in everything he saw and smelled. Blake even began working on some small projects with his Grandpa at the ripe old age of three years old!

As a full time woodworker from 2011 on, Blake gives his deepest thanks to the many instructors he's been privileged to study under especially during his intensive two year apprenticeship with the master craftsman at the Heritage School of Woodworking in Waco, TX. Also many thanks to Peter Galbert, Greg Pennington and Curtis Buchanan for their invaluable tutorship into the world of Windsor Chairmaking.

Blake's hope is to impart as much knowledge and excitement for the craft of Windsor chair making as he can for everyone young and old to create long lasting beautiful pieces of furniture by hand! You can view Blake's work at [blakeloree.com](http://blakeloree.com)



### Ember Side Chair

Tuition: \$1,400 (Maple/Pine)

\$1,500 (Walnut)

Dates: Jul 8-12, 2024



#### Program Description:

The Ember chair is an original design for a local restaurant that needed about 120 chair in a short time frame and so we simplified the traditional Windsor side chair to be extremely sturdy and easy to produce.

This is an in depth 5 day class in which you will learn the basics in Windsor chair making. Woodturning is at the heart of this chair and you will have the opportunity to become proficient on the lathe by turning all the parts for your chair.

We will also laminate the crest in a vacuum press and of course all the drilling, reaming, and other joinery required for this chair. In addition we will carve the seat (my favorite part!) and shape the crest using a variety of hand tools.



### Democratic Side Chair

Tuition: \$1,500

Dates: Jul 22-26

#### Program Description:

In this intensive 5 day Windsor chair class we will build Curtis Buchanan's democratic side chair. This class requires a lot of physical labor so please come prepared to put in some good 8 hr days building this amazing chair!

We start by splitting a fresh oak log and working the wood while it has the most moisture content possible. The drawknife is at the heart of this chair and we'll use it extensively to shape every part the chair. While those parts are drying we will bore ream and carve the seat. Next we'll do all the joinery required to glue up the chair.

This class is an amazing introduction to green woodworking and will push seasoned woodworkers in their hand tool skills - especially with the drawknife!







## Joe Miller

PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER

SPECIALIZATIONS: Design, analysis and fabrication of traditional heavy timber structures

Licensed P.E. in MI, WI, MN, KS, MO, IN, IA, NC, GA, OK, TN. P.Eng. in BC, AB, and ON.

In 2009, before the ink dried on Joe's Ph.D., he joined the Fire Tower team, where he will continue his groundbreaking work on keyed beams. Joe's interest in timber framing grew from a project he took on with his father, rebuilding an ancestral barn in southern Indiana. In Joe's freshman year at the Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, he attended a lecture by Ben Brunggraber. Ben must have said something inspiring, because Joe ventured forth on an ambitious track that eventually led to a Masters in Civil Engineering at University of Wyoming. While in school, Joe conducted innovative research on the strength of wooden dowels - findings that significantly advanced the acceptance of timber frame construction among engineers and code officials. Masters degree in hand, Joe had a two-year stint with Yankee Barn Homes in New Hampshire, doing engineering, lateral analysis, drafting and frame design. Next came a spell with Trillium Dell Timberworks in Illinois, where he refined his design, engineering and cutting skills in the shop. Meanwhile, Joe sought out a school where he could undertake intensive research on key laminated beams. Michigan Technological University gave him the green light, and now Joe has a Doctorate of Philosophy in Civil Engineering for his analytic methodology for the design and engineering of keyed beams.



### Intro to Timber Frame Construction: Design/Make Break

Tuition: ~~\$825~~ \$625

Dates: May 10-12, 2024

**\$200 scholarships available to all participants  
courtesy of the Department of Natural Resources.**



#### Program Description:

Starting with an overview on how to determine the forces and loads a traditional timber frame structure (or really any structure) will see over the course of its lifetime, the course focus will transition into sizing of beams, as well as a primer on basic joinery and connection design. In order to break up the class room portion, we will design a basic timber frame joint, calculate its allowable design strength, and then fabricate it out of timber. After the joints are fabricated, we will "bust" them by pulling them apart using a hydraulic load frame, with friendly bragging rights awarded for the best prediction of strength and best capacity. Experience in design or fabrication of timber frames is not required, but basic math skills will be handy. There will be something to learn for beginners up through experienced framers.



Proudly sponsored by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in an effort to promote Michigan's greatest natural resources... lumber!



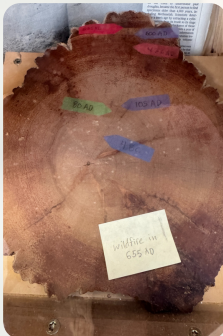
## Tom Nehil

STRUCTURAL ENGINEER

SPECIALIZATIONS: Preservation and Reuse of Historic Buildings, Wood Identification, Timber Frame Design, Traditional Stone Masonry

Tom Nehil is a structural engineer in Kalamazoo, Michigan, where he specializes in evaluation, preservation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings. Tom is a member of the Timber Framers Guild and Timber Frame Engineering Council and chairs the Timber Grading Training Committee. He is a member of the Association for Preservation Technology, the Michigan Barn Preservation Network and the Michigan Historic Preservation Network along with other professional organizations. He is a regular instructor at Tillers International in Kalamazoo where he teaches wood identification, timber frame design, and traditional stone masonry.

Tom's interest in wood goes back to his days as a young professional carpenter prior to starting his engineering career. He is a woodworker, wood turner, and timber framer in his spare time.



### Wood Species Identification

Tuition: ~~\$300~~ \$250

Date: July 13, 2024

**\$50 scholarships available to all participants  
courtesy of the Department of Natural Resources.**



#### Program Description:

In this full day workshop, participants will gain skills needed to identify woods no matter what the sample size, be it a board, a log, or a small sample. The class will focus on common hardwoods and softwoods of North America. Skills learned can be applied to identification of non-native species as well.



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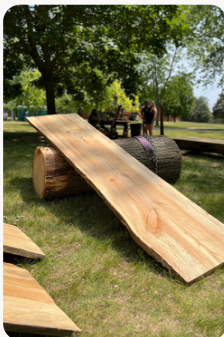


## Frederik Laleicke

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR & WOOD PRODUCTS EXTENSION SPECIALIST

SPECIALIZATIONS: Urban Wood Utilization, Mass Timber

Frederik Laleicke is an Assistant Professor and Wood Products Extension Specialist in the Department of Forest Biomaterials at NC State University. Frederik is very enthusiastic about forest products, and working with the industry and academia, to advance the use of wood in North Carolina. Originally from Germany, Frederik studied at the University of Hamburg, before joining Oregon State University for a graduate degree program in 2012. After graduating in 2015, Frederik remained at OSU for two more years to pursue a series of different research projects for the Fraunhofer WKI, the leading research institution for forest products in Germany. At NC State he currently focuses on Urban Wood Utilization and Mass Timber. He regularly offers different workshops with a focus on drying. As an Extension Specialist, identifying and solving problems has been a welcome challenge for more than 10 years in this field. Frederik also serves on the Board of Directors for the Urban Wood Network.



### Urban Wood Drying Workshop

Tuition: ~~\$425~~ \$350

Dates: June 3-5, 2024

**\$75 scholarships available to all participants courtesy of the Department of Natural Resources.**

#### Program Description:

Proper drying is the key to turning freshly milled urban wood into high-value, marketable lumber. This comprehensive workshop equips participants with the knowledge and resources to understand what is happening to their wood as it dries. Participants will understand how to control the processes and the strategies and tools available to improve their drying operation. Through interactive sessions and expert-led demonstrations, participants will gain the skills to develop a strategic drying plan and implement best practices for achieving consistent, high-quality lumber results.



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## John Binegar

FOREST INDUSTRY MANAGEMENT

SPECIALIZATIONS: Sustainable Practices, Green Wood Sector, Timber Buying

John Binegar brings a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to sustainable forestry practices. With a career spanning over three decades in the forestry sector, John's journey began with a solid foundation in Natural Resources - Forest Industry Management, which he obtained from Ohio State University in December of 1987. Shortly after graduation, John embarked on what would become a distinguished career at Hardwoods of Michigan/Tri-County Logging, starting in March of 1988. Over the next 35 years, John's dedication and skill saw him advancing through various positions within the company. His deep understanding of the industry and commitment to sustainable practices culminated in his final role there, where for the last ten years, he managed the green wood sector, focusing on Timber Buying. His efforts were instrumental in securing over 10,000 forestry contracts, reflecting his significant impact on the industry.

In 2023, John took on the role of Vice-President of Forestry Management Services, a locally owned company led by Richard Service since 2014. This company, known for its conservative management and selective harvesting principles, aligns perfectly with John's values and expertise in promoting sustainable forestry practices.



### Timber for Today and Tomorrow: Sustainable Forest Management for Landowners

Tuition: ~~\$175~~ \$85

Date: Sept 21, 2024

**\$90 scholarships available to all participants courtesy of the Department of Natural Resources.**

#### Program Description:

Are you a landowner in southeast Michigan with a hardwood forest facing the challenges of overgrowth? Join the Sam Beauford Woodworking Institute (SBWI) in partnership with Forestry Management Services INC (FMS) and the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) for a one-day intensive course designed to empower you to make informed decisions about your valuable forest resource.



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