

Carpentry course launches student's new career



Don Zilstra shows off the Works of Wood organic rain barrel.

By Tony Pearson

In an outcome which again indicates that you really can start afresh, a recent graduate of the SIRCH Community Service carpentry course has found full time local employment in her new field – one she had never practised before taking the SIRCH training. And in turn, that has resulted in an invitation to show off the range of student projects at the Saw-Tech Log-Expo, taking place this weekend in Bancroft.

Sue Sutherland had no carpentry experience before she decided to take the course, taught by Don Zilstra, a former renovation contractor. But no sooner had she finished her instruction than she was offered a job at Payless Lumber in Bird's Creek. She quickly found herself applying what she'd learned. Using power tools, she planes wood with different profiles, for molding and trim, and produces samples for customer inspection. She also interacts with customers, handling their questions on wood and lumber. It's been a great growth experience.

Her work at Payless caught the attention of John Goulet, a Saw-Tech organizer. From Payless, Goulet dropped over to the SIRCH warehouse. There, he saw the various products produced by the students, including the 'green' wooden rain barrel and the critter-proof garbage box, as well as new products developed by students during the course, like an all-purpose dog feeder. Impressed, he extended an invitation for SIRCH to set up a booth in the Value-Added pavilion. This is where visitors can see all the uses to which wood can be put, including many that aren't typically associated with lumber. As well, one of the beautifully-crafted rain barrels will be offered as a door prize.

SIRCH is now planning to inaugurate new instruction programs at the warehouse site (beside Kawartha Dairy on Hwy. 28). These will provide homeowners to look after their carpentry and plumbing needs, as well as learn furniture maintenance and restoration. They're also thinking of running courses in the evenings and/or on weekends, to widen access. They will conduct an informal survey

of course needs from their Saw-Tech location.

The chance to see a good-news story is yet another reason to visit Saw-Tech this weekend, at the North Hastings Arena and the Bancroft Curling Club.