

# Clamp Storage Solutions

Three woodworkers offer clever ways to keep clamps organized

Clamps are to woodshops what closets are to houses: You can't have too many of them. Band clamps, bar clamps, C-clamps, corner clamps, edge clamps, hand clamps, miter clamps, pipe clamps, quick clamps, spring clamps—you can pile them all in a corner or throw them into a drawer. Or you can organize them on a wall or a movable cart that will make them easy to get at when you need them and will keep them out of the way when you don't. What follows are examples of how some of our readers solved their clamp-storage problems.



# Wall Rack

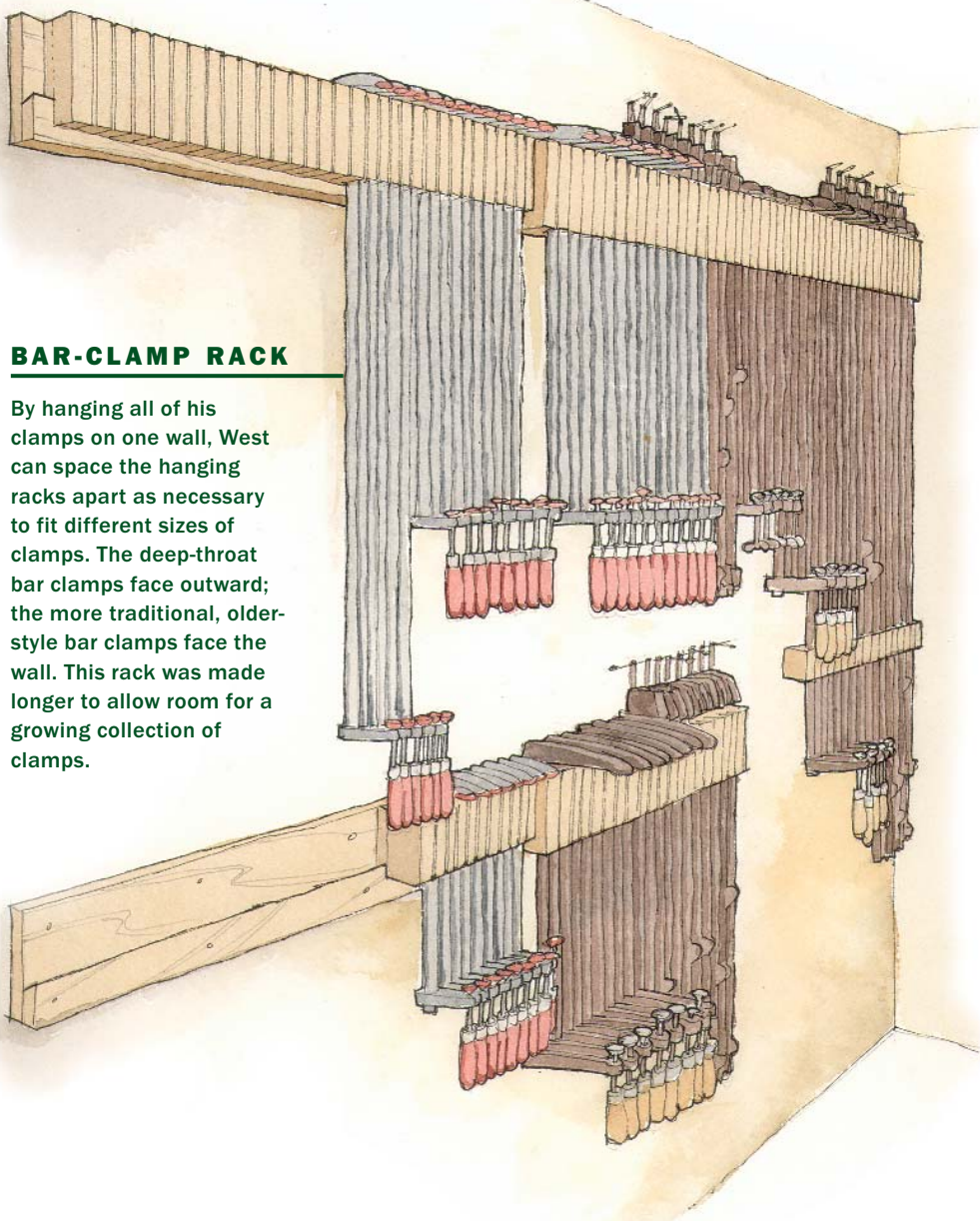
BY JOHN WEST

The wall of a lumber rack doubles as a place to store clamps

Having recently moved to a smaller shop, I had to find somewhere to store my fairly large collection of bar clamps and hand clamps. When considering where to put them, I decided against a fancy rack that rolls around the shop on casters because the floor space it would require is too dear. I wanted my clamps near the area where large glue-up projects will be done, but I also wanted to keep them out of the way when they're not needed. The solution was to hang the clamps on the outside wall of a lumber-storage rack. (In the business world, they call this "multitasking.")

The racks I designed are quite simple, and they can be used to store a variety of different-size clamps. First, securely fasten a  $\frac{3}{4}$ -in.-thick hanger strip (plywood or medium-density fiberboard) to the wall, using two screws at every stud location. This hanger strip serves two purposes: It's a sturdy anchor, and it adds depth for building out the rack enough to make a good ledge on which to hang the bar clamps. Along the bottom of the hanger strip goes another  $\frac{3}{4}$ -in. plywood cleat (what some people call a French cleat) with a 45° cut along the top edge. That bottom cleat gets screwed to the hanger cleat. Another matching plywood cleat with a 45° cut along the bottom edge has blocks of lumber screwed into the front face from behind; these blocks are spaced apart so there's room to hang the clamps on them. Nothing fancy—most of the racks I used were salvaged from my previous shop, where they've given 20 years of faithful service so far. Depending on the type of clamps, they will hang better facing in or out, because of how the weight is balanced. On the 12-ft. wall shown on the facing page, I currently store 108 clamps, and there's room for more.

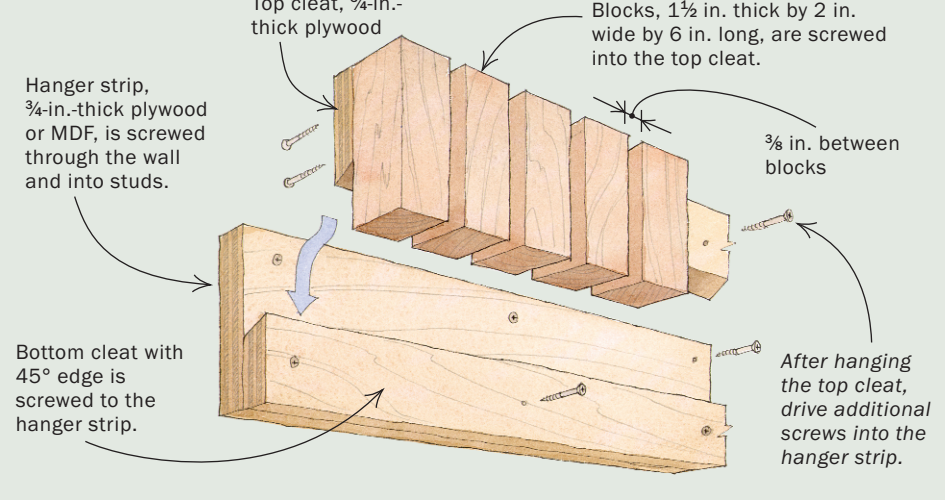
John West owns and operates Cope and Mould Millwork in Ridgefield, Conn.



## BAR-CLAMP RACK

By hanging all of his clamps on one wall, West can space the hanging racks apart as necessary to fit different sizes of clamps. The deep-throat bar clamps face outward; the more traditional, older-style bar clamps face the wall. This rack was made longer to allow room for a growing collection of clamps.

## MOUNTING DETAIL



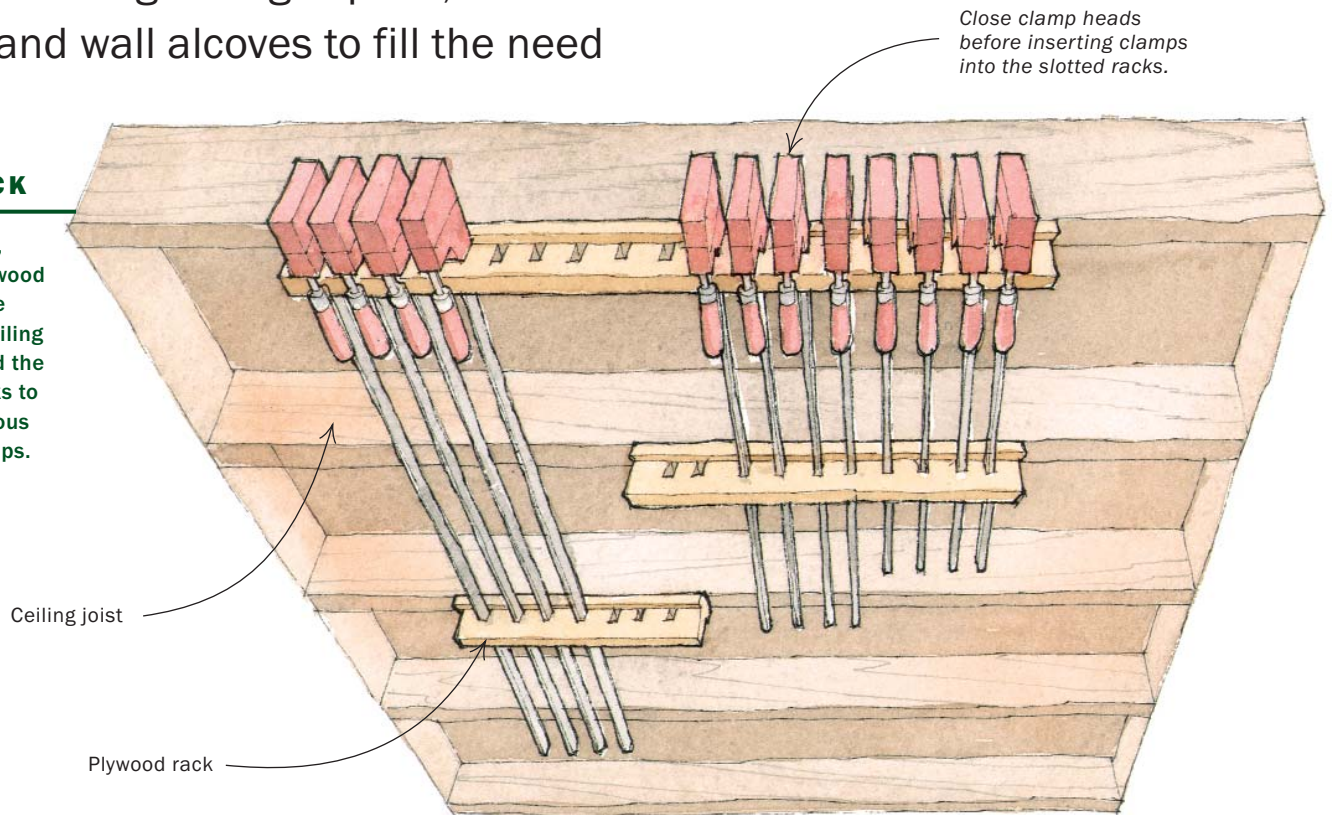
# Ceiling and Wall Racks

BY BROOK DUERR

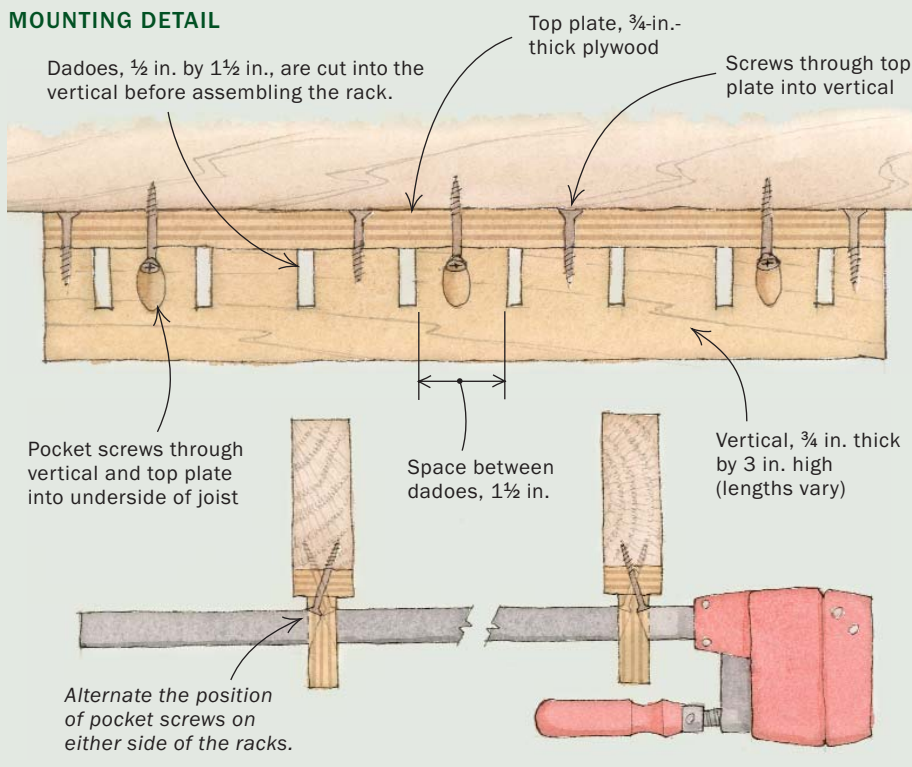
In a shop lacking storage space, look for ceilings and wall alcoves to fill the need

## BAR-CLAMP CEILING RACK

To hold bar clamps, Duerr fastened plywood racks directly to the underside of the ceiling joists. He staggered the position of the racks to accommodate various lengths of bar clamps.



## MOUNTING DETAIL



In my basement shop, wall space and open floor space are scarce. Faced with a growing collection of all kinds of clamps, I didn't know where to store them. One day it dawned on me that I could make use of the unfinished ceiling, with its exposed joists, and one wall alcove to store clamps out of the way. I designed and built several different racks, basing the design on the dimensions of each type of clamp.

For my bar clamps, I constructed each rack with two strips of 3/4-in.-thick Baltic birch plywood, fastened together into a T shape with screws driven through the top plate. The top plate is 1 1/2 in. wide, and the vertical piece is 3 in. wide; the lengths will vary according to the number of clamps of each size you need to store. Before assembling the two pieces, I used a dado blade to cut a series of 1/2-in. by 1 1/2-in. dadoes to serve as slots for slipping the clamps into the racks. You could use a finger-joint jig on the tablesaw if you have a lot of dadoes to cut, but I simply marked

## QUICK-CLAMP CEILING RACK

After running out of room on a wall rack, Duerr added this ceiling rack. He routed a groove into the top to stabilize the hanging clamps and keep them from falling out.

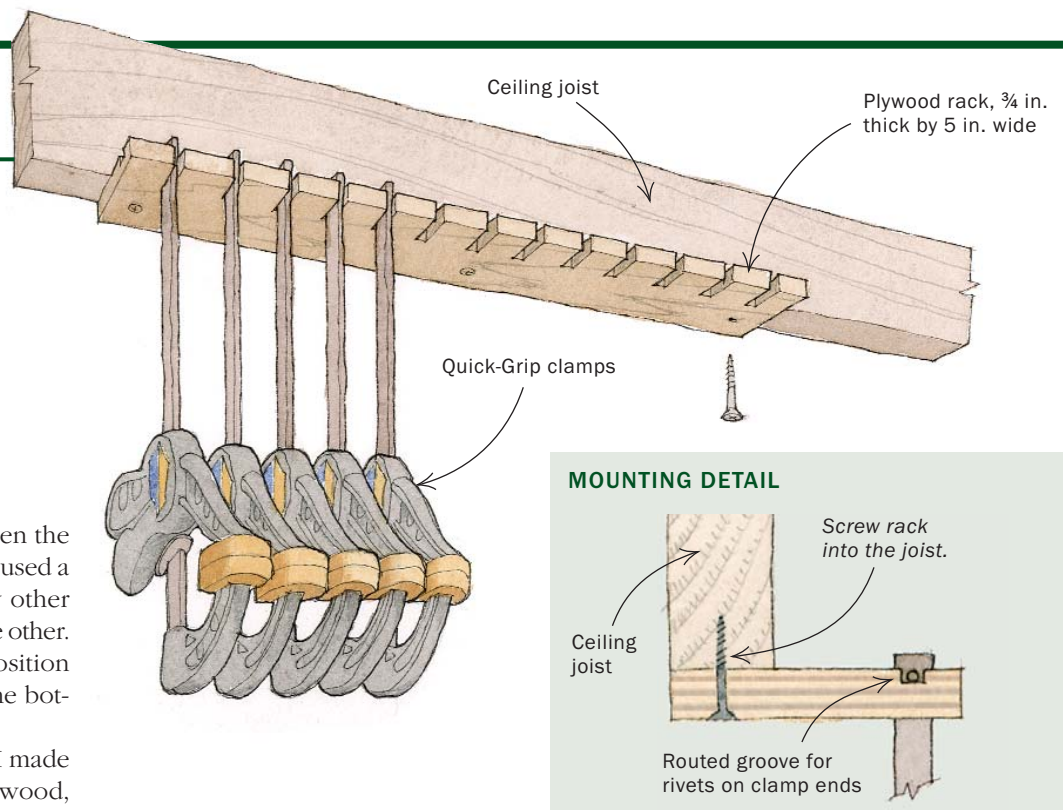
each one with a pencil line. To fasten the racks to the underside of the joists, I used a pocket-screw jig, alternating every other screw from one side of the rack to the other. I put the clamps into the closed position and slip them into the racks with the bottom end first.

For all of my Quick-Grip clamps, I made a rack out of a single piece of plywood,  $\frac{3}{4}$  in. thick by 5 in. wide. The plywood is screwed into a joist from below. I cut a series of dados on one side only for hanging each clamp. I also used the dado blade to cut a groove in the top surface that runs the length of that edge. The rivets on the bottoms of the clamps sit in that groove and keep the clamps from falling out.

For my pipe clamps I arrived at a solution similar to the ceiling racks for my bar clamps. I drilled a series of  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -in.-dia. holes in matching pairs of  $\frac{3}{4}$ -in.-thick material and mounted them onto a plywood back, which in turn was screwed to studs against a wall where I store my dust collector.

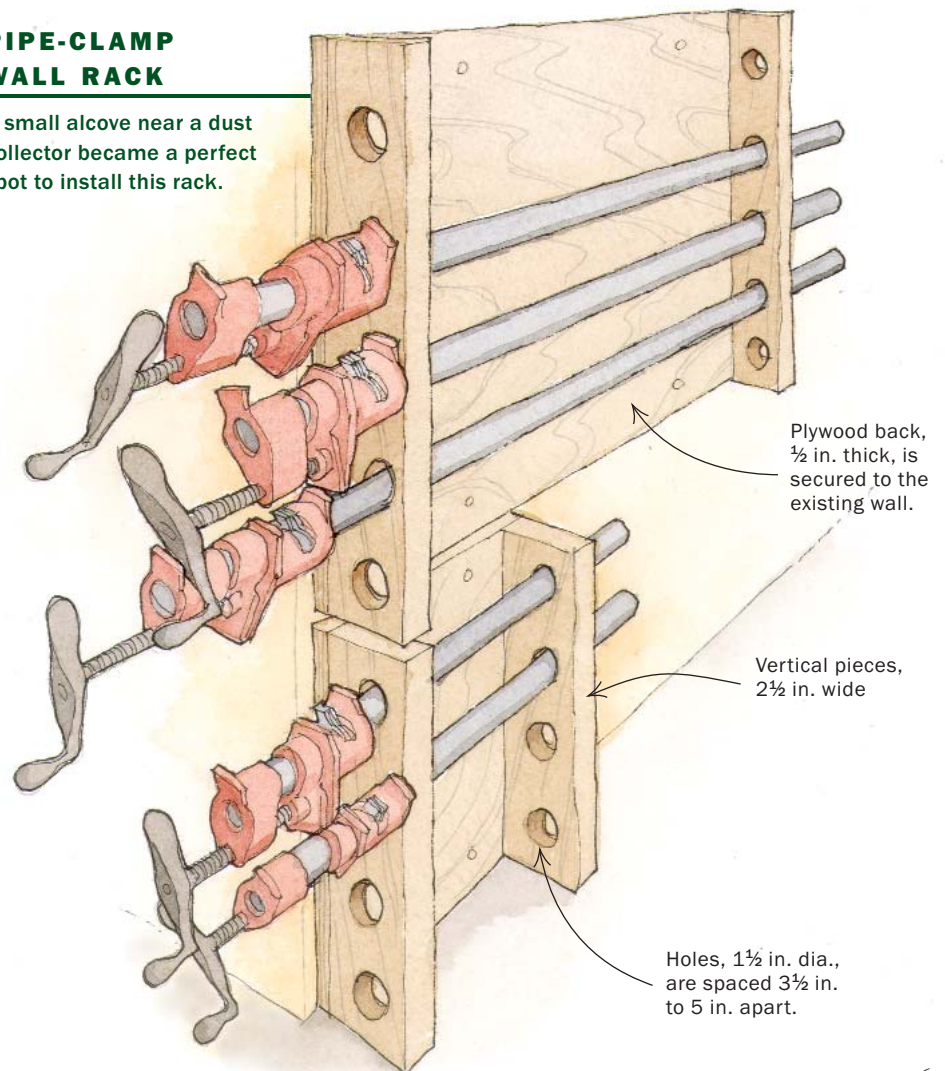
I drilled the holes  $3\frac{1}{2}$  in. apart, but if I had to do it again, I'd make the spacing about 5 in. apart for more clearance of the clamp heads. With this design, it's important that one end is on the outside corner of the wall so that the clamp handles don't bind against the wall as you place the pipe clamps into the rack; then you'll have easy access to them when you need them.

*Brook Duerr is a research scientist for a medical-device manufacturer. He does woodworking in his basement shop in a suburb of St. Paul, Minn.*



## PIPE-CLAMP WALL RACK

A small alcove near a dust collector became a perfect spot to install this rack.



# Clamp Cart

BY DAVID DIRANNA

When floor space is plentiful, rolling storage racks bring the clamps to where you need them

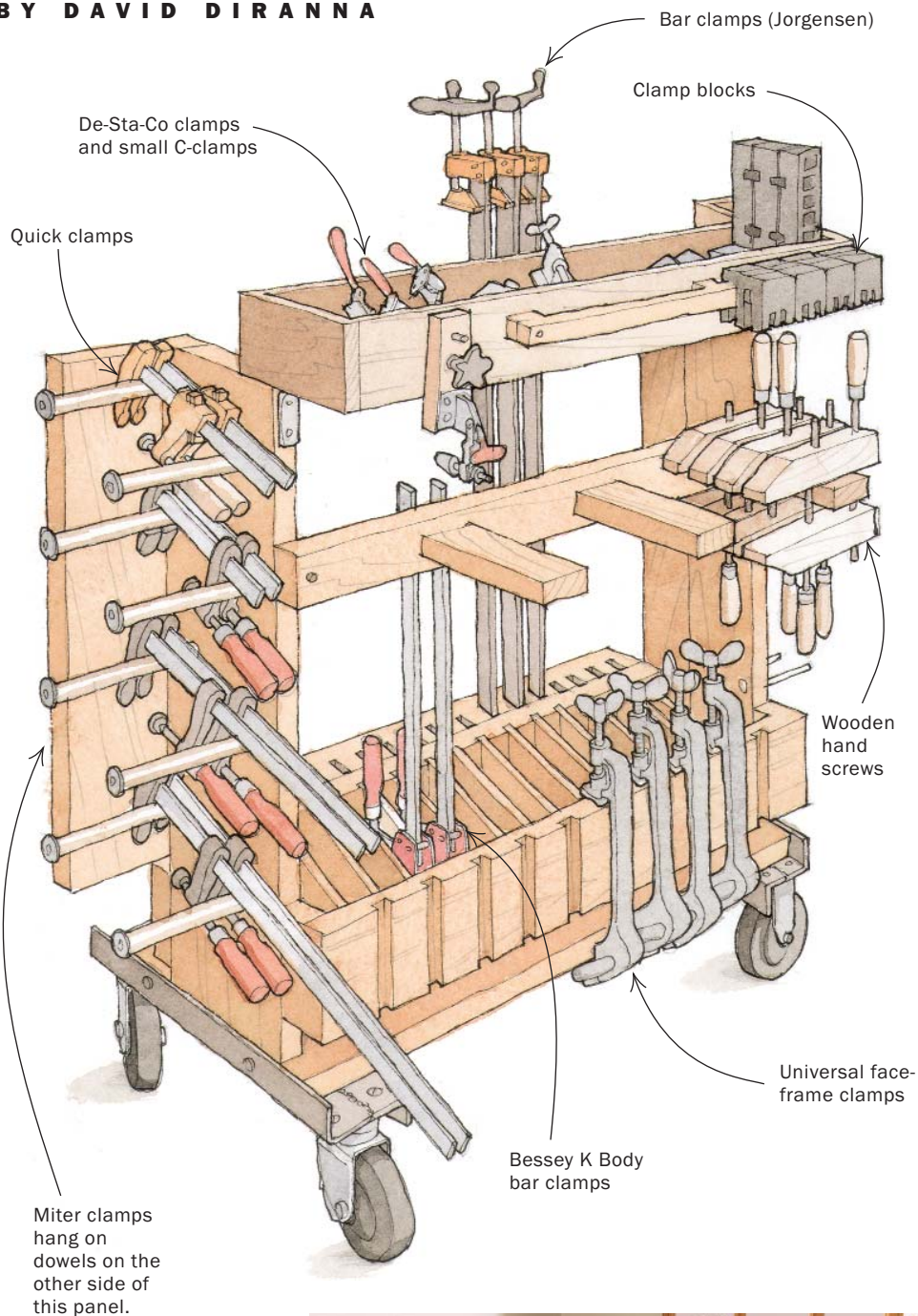
I took up woodworking 22 years ago when I received a radial-arm saw as a present. For most of that time, I had to share shop space with two cars in a three-car garage. But about five years ago, I kicked out the cars, reorganized the layout of the shop and built storage cabinets along many of the walls.

The end result gave me a lot more floor space to work in, and so when the time came to figure out how to store my small clamp collection, I decided a mobile cart was the best solution for me. I put most of the machinery on casters for the same reason—I like the freedom of being able to move things around. On one end, two casters are fixed, while the other two are swivel—that combination works best.

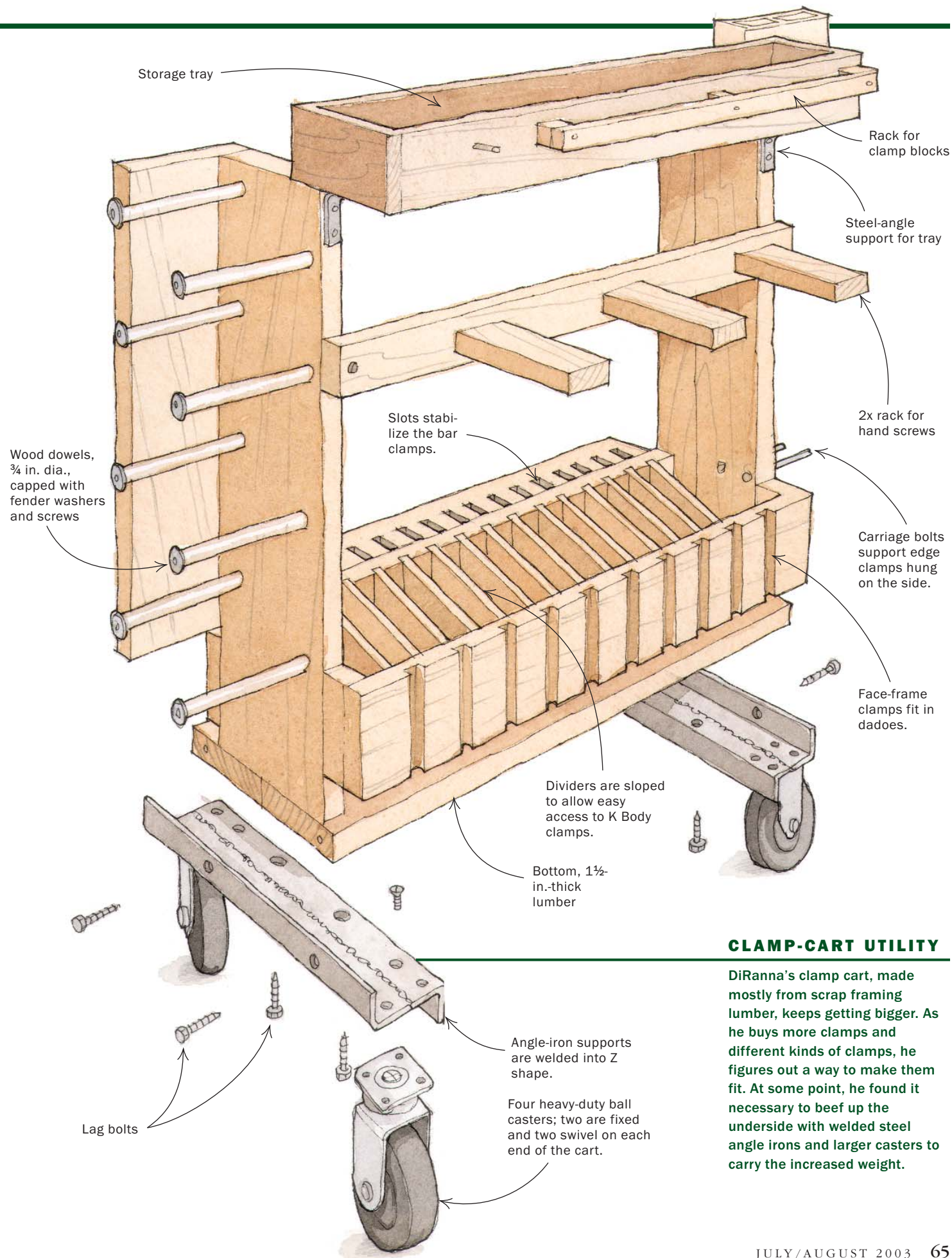
My main problem with clamps is that I keep buying more. When I first started building this clamp-storage cart, I didn't have a master design for it as it now looks, because I had many fewer clamps than I do now. The design of the cart has undergone a sort of organic evolutionary process.

The purchase of every new batch of clamps has turned this into a modular construction project. I just keep finding ways to add onto the cart to accommodate my most recent clamp purchases. The cart got so heavy at one point that I found it necessary to replace the original 3-in. casters with a heavier-duty 5-in. ball-bearing style. I figured out recently that I'm storing more than \$2,000 worth of clamps on the cart. I just hope I don't find it necessary to buy any more. □

*David DiRanna taught college-level business courses for many years before switching careers to a business-management position.*



**Have clamps, will travel.** Blessed with plenty of floor space, DiRanna chose to put all of his many clamps on a rolling cart.



## CLAMP-CART UTILITY

DiRanna's clamp cart, made mostly from scrap framing lumber, keeps getting bigger. As he buys more clamps and different kinds of clamps, he figures out a way to make them fit. At some point, he found it necessary to beef up the underside with welded steel angle irons and larger casters to carry the increased weight.