

# Fine-Tune Your Shop

Ingenious carts, tables, and storage solutions improve your work environment

BY JERRY H. LYONS

I had longed dreamed of creating a perfect shop and using it to teach wood-working. I reached that goal five years ago when I purchased a 3,000-sq.-ft. ranch-style log cabin near my home. I converted that space into a shop where I do woodwork and offer classes on the subject.

Two words describe my workshop environment: clean and organized. As long as I can remember, I have needed a place for everything and everything in its place. I may have inherited the trait in school woodshop as the student who cleaned up

after every class. Or perhaps my most recent career as a training and safety consultant, declaring the benefits of organization and systemization, has rubbed off on me.

Working in such a large space, I needed to keep hand tools organized, so I designed wall-mounted storage panels that make it easy to see and access tools. To make the workspace more efficient and adaptable, I also employ a variety of work tables and rolling carts, which do double duty as storage for project parts, related hardware, and even hand tools and jigs.

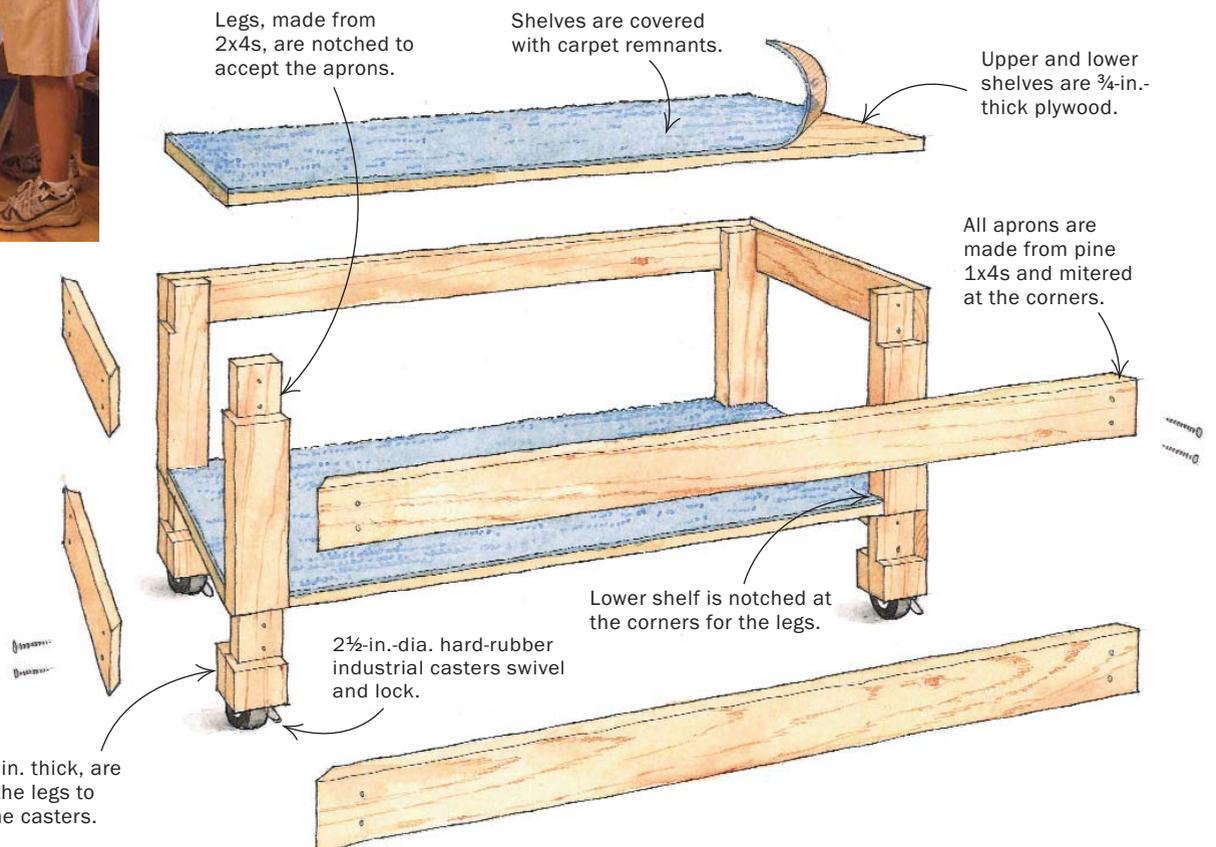
*Jerry H. Lyons, who taught furniture making for 21 years, recently built his dream shop near Glasgow, Ky.*



**A secretary on the move.** This rolling cart allows Lyons to move work around the shop easily. It also keeps a piece at a comfortable working height, with access to all sides.

## ASSEMBLY CART RAISES WORK

This shopmade cart provides a comfortable working height (about 24 in.) and easy access to the back and sides of a large project, like this slant-top secretary (left). Also, the cart makes it easier and safer to roll a piece around my shop to take advantage of natural light. Both shelves are carpeted to protect the edges of the workpiece, and the lower shelf provides storage for components and hardware.



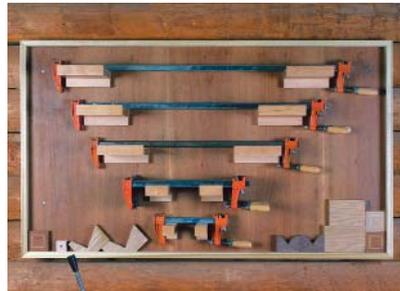
## WALL PANELS ORGANIZE HAND TOOLS

Like many woodworkers, I have lots of hand tools, and I want to be able to find a tool when I need it. I would rather spend my time working than looking. To organize my hand-tool collection, I built four tool panels near my workbenches. Each tool, regardless of its size, fits into its own space within one of these panels. The panel backs are made of  $\frac{3}{4}$ -in.-thick seven-ply oak plywood. The edging is solid oak rabbeted to receive the plywood and mitered at the corners.

To accommodate the needs of several students at once, all panels include common tools such as handsaws and planes. Whenever possible, I grouped tools—such as those for measuring, layout, and cutting—according to use.

I used a bandsaw, handplanes, and sanders to shape and mold each tool holder's unique configuration. I glued the tool holders in place and used screws and dowels for reinforcement.

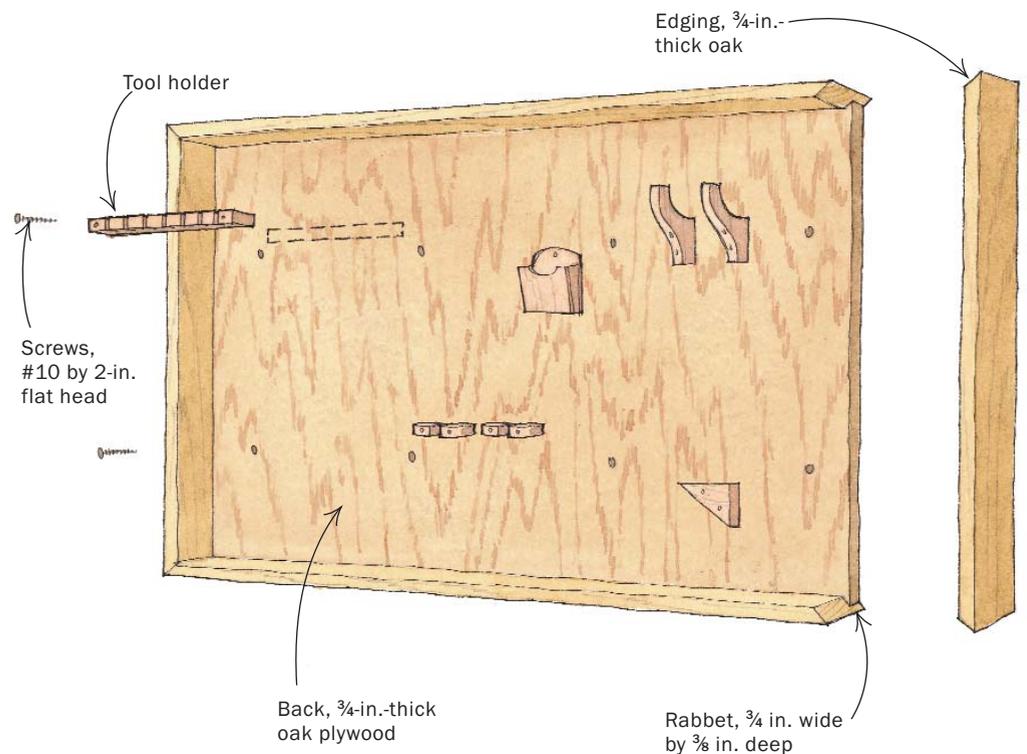
**Designs on display.** Lyons finds it helpful to keep plans for his current project displayed so that he can reference them easily but not get them damaged.



**Tools are grouped according to use.** Layout tools and clamps are gathered on this tool panel.



**A place for everything.** Wall panels display hand tools, making them easy to find and access.





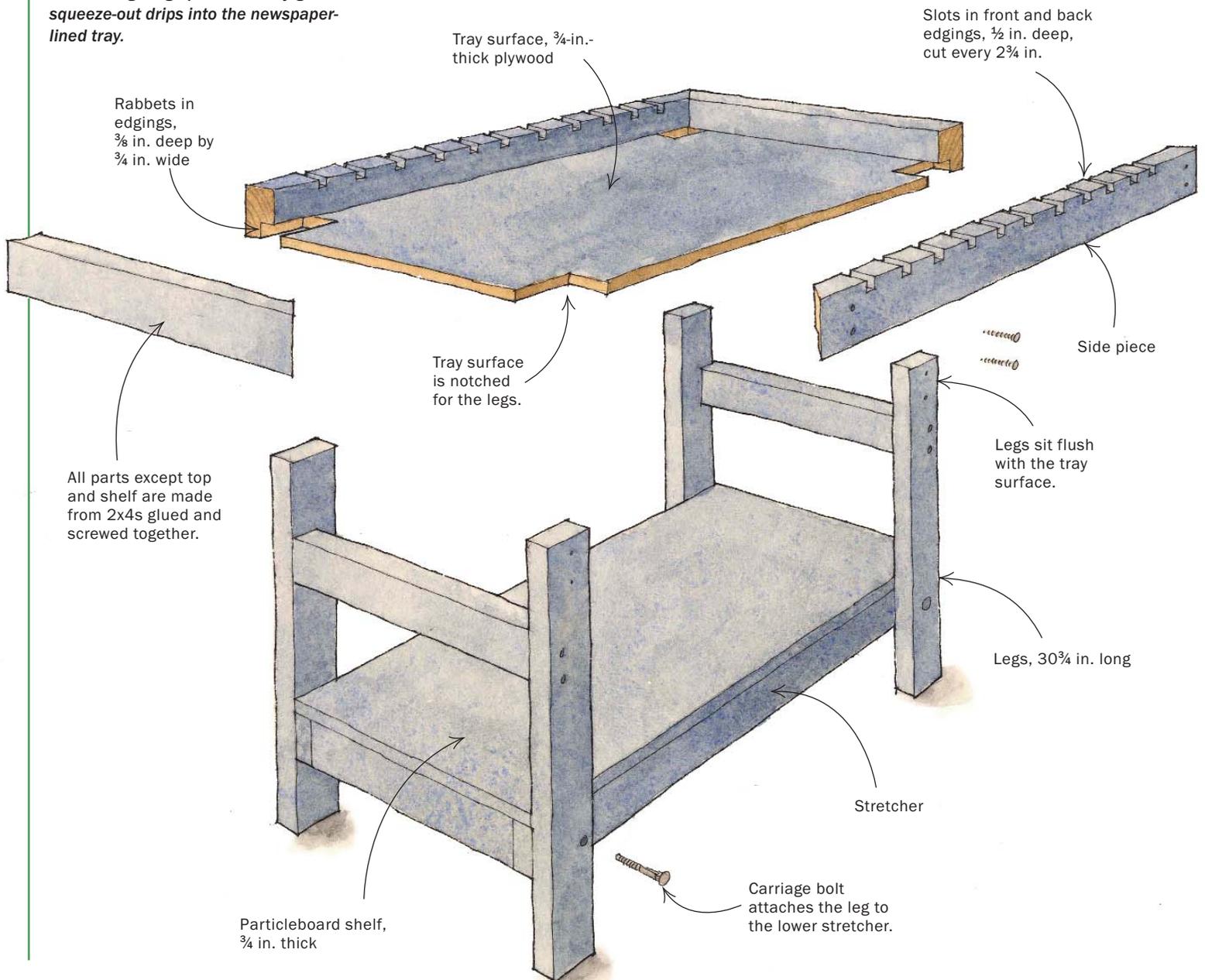
## CLAMPING TABLE TACKLES GLUE-UPS

**G**luing boards into panels often calls for at least three pairs of hands: one to keep the boards aligned, one to stop the clamps from falling over, and one to clean up the surplus glue. I solved this problem by making a dedicated clamping table.

The front and back edgings of the table are slotted to position I-beam bar clamps in an upright position. The tray below is covered with newspapers to catch glue squeeze-out. When done, I simply fold up the newspapers and discard them. This table also has a lower shelf to hold extra newspapers, several jigs, and occasionally used items.

I used a variety of scraps of plywood and solid stock to build the table, then I painted the whole piece with leftover floor paint. This has the bonus of making glue cleanup easier. Size the table based on what scraps are available and the kind of work you do. My table is 30½ in. deep by 65 in. wide by 32 in. tall.

**Less stress and less mess.** The slotted table frame holds clamps in position while gluing up boards. Any glue squeeze-out drips into the newspaper-lined tray.



## MOBILE TABLE SERVES MANY NEEDS

**T**his table is my heavyweight shop assistant: With a 1,000-lb. capacity, it never complains of backache; four wheels means it can move anywhere on the heavy-machinery floor; and because its wheels lock, the table never backs out when I need it most. The table is  $\frac{1}{8}$  in. below the height of the tablesaw to eliminate boards getting caught on it when being ripped. It can be positioned either lengthwise or widthwise, depending on the shape of the board being cut. It also makes a nice outfeed surface when planing long parts. In addition, it is a handy table for layout work as well as a good place to store clamps and other accessories. As with the clamping table, the dimensions of your table will differ based on your tools and the work you do.



**A multipurpose support table.** This table can be wheeled to support operations at the tablesaw or the jointer, while the base stores clamps and jigs.

