

# YELLOW WOOD NOTES

An Occasional Publication  
for the Benefit of  
Our Clients, Colleagues, and Friends

Winter 2002

## In This Issue

Training for Measurement Guides  
Promote Learning With A Game of Jeopardy  
Assisting Displaced Furniture Makers  
**See the Forest<sup>sm</sup>** Heads South

We Welcome Your Comments

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## Island Pond Woodworkers Alliance

Yellow Wood Associates teamed up with Harry Kokkinis of Kokkinis & Associates and Jon Zeltsman of Zeltsman Associates to assist a group of woodworkers from Island Pond, Vermont. The workers, laid off by Ethan Allen Furniture in July, 2001, decided to investigate the feasibility of starting their own solid wood product manufacturing company in Island Pond. They are experienced in all phases of manufacture of high-end production casegoods and accessories. Since their plant was only a production facility, they do not have experience with marketing, sales, or distribution.

The goal of the Island Pond woodworkers is to either form an independent company, or to partner with an existing firm to provide additional manufacturing capacity or add wood into an existing product line.

The pre-feasibility study, which included a human resource assessment of former Ethan Allen employees, identifica-

tion and exploration of target market opportunities in solid wood manufacturing, an assessment of the Ethan Allen factory building in Island Pond, and a preliminary financial analysis for the new business, concluded that there is potential for a viable solid wood manufacturing business in Island Pond assuming several critical conditions can be met. These results were greeted with enthusiasm by the former employees who voted overwhelming to move ahead to the next stage of business development.

The Island Pond Woodworkers Alliance, a group of former Ethan Allen employees with a vision for the future of their community, have spearheaded this effort with support from the Vermont Employee Ownership Center, Economic Development Council of Northern Vermont, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund, Northern Community Investment Corporation, Northeastern Vermont Development Association, and the Town of Brighton.

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• **Homophonetics**

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• A homophone is a word that sounds the same as another, but is different in spelling and meaning. In the following examples, the first word is a synonym of the word that is one of the answers to the puzzle. The second word is a synonym of a homophone of the answer to the first part of the puzzle. The numbers represent the number of letters in the answers to the first and second parts of the puzzle, respectively. Confused? An example: reason, extracted (4,5). The answer is MIND & MINED. This puzzler and others can be found at [www.puzz.com](http://www.puzz.com).

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- 1. whirl, actual (4,4)
- 2. bay, sting (5,4)
- 3. ring, skin (4,4)
- 4. routine, scribed (4,5)

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### *Backwoods Guide to Computer Lingo*

We get material for *Yellow Wood Notes* from a wide variety of sources—projects we’re working on, people we know, and e-mail we’ve received—and sometimes that information comes to us without any record of its source. Such was the case in our June 1997 newsletter, when we printed a piece called “The Vermonter’s Guide to Computer Lingo.” As it turns out, the list we printed (e.g., “log on: makin’ the woodstove hotter”) comes from a copyrighted book by Vermonter Dave Nilson, *The Backwoods Guide to Computer Lingo*. We would like to apologize to Dave and his wife Janine for not citing their book in our original article. And yes, the book is still in print. Readers can order a copy directly from the Nilsons at (802) 773-7735 or online at Amazon.com.

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*YWA staff at our new home, 228 North Main Street. From left: Mike Ballard, Debra Mason, Mary Nieman, Shanna Ratner, Paige Manning.*

### You Get What You Measure<sup>sm</sup>

YWA will be offering training for measurement guides in St. Albans, Vermont on February 4 & 5, 2002. “**Becoming a Measurement Guide**” is designed for professionals who already have basic facilitation skills and experience. Those who successfully complete this four-day course, (two days of in-house training and two days of application and coaching), will be licensed to deliver **You Get What You Measure<sup>sm</sup>** to their clients. If you miss this session,

but would like to receive training, contact us.

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Shanna Ratner presented an overview of **You Get What You Measure<sup>sm</sup>** at a session called “Developing Our Local Leaders” at the Rural Summit in the City convened by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania in November, 2001. The Center for Rural Pennsylvania is a legislative agency of the Pennsylvania General Assembly.



#### **About Yellow Wood Notes . . .**

Yellow Wood Notes is a twice yearly publication of Yellow Wood Associates, Inc. Our purpose in publishing this newsletter is to maintain contact and share ideas with friends, colleagues, and clients. We appreciate your feedback and suggestions.

Yellow Wood Associates, Inc. is a private, for-profit firm specializing in rural economic research and training for community capacity building. We provide clients with customized analyses and models of successful intervention in rural areas around the U.S. and abroad. Our clients include small towns; non-profit organizations; federal, state, and county governments; foundations; and the private sector.

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## Seeing The Forest in Southern New England

Yellow Wood Associates has been hired by the Southern New England Forest Consortium to offer our **See The Forest<sup>sm</sup>** program to communities in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island. **See The Forest<sup>sm</sup>** is an innovative training program designed to help communities fully integrate the value of forests into their local decision-making. The program includes five workshop modules. Each workshop module has three components- forest facts and concepts, community building practices, and a field session to provide on-the-ground experience in the woods.

YWA staff facilitated the first workshop, "Understanding Your Forest Resources," on December 1, 2001 in

Thompson, Connecticut. Thompson residents joined participants from Burrillville, Rhode Island and Douglas, Massachusetts in a rare opportunity to think across state lines about the health and importance of the forests in their region. The day was filled with lots of sharing and discussion. Participants identified goals to work on in future workshops. The second workshop in the series, "Understanding Your Forest Economy," will be held in February or March.

Further information about **See The Forest<sup>sm</sup>** can be found at [www.yellowwood.org](http://www.yellowwood.org) or email [yellowwood@yellowwood.org](mailto:yellowwood@yellowwood.org).



## What We're Reading

*Fast Food Nation. The Dark Side of the All-American Meal* by Eric Schlosser.

This book will make you seriously question those hamburgers and fries. Some call it the Silent Spring of the fast food industry. It was all I could talk about for months. Guaranteed to change the way you think about fast food. ~ Paige

*The Blood Runs Like A River Through My Dreams* is a deeply personal memoir about living on and around the Navajo reservation. Nasdijj, the author whose name is Athabaskan for "to become again," captures the true grit of poverty, passion, and lives spent carving choices out of stone. Not an easy read, but highly recommended. ~ Shanna

What questions are you asking yourself as you read this newsletter? How will those questions affect the information you come away with and what you subsequently do with it? I was looking for ways to assist community groups in framing research questions when I came upon *The Art of the Question* by Marilee Goldberg. Goldberg is a psychotherapist who teaches her clients to change problematic life situations by changing the questions they ask themselves. I found this book useful for my original purpose, and continue to consult it whenever I need help in thinking of queries that will open the doors for new thinking and action in my work with rural communities. ~ Debra

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## Tricks of the Trade: *Forest Jeopardy*

This past fall YWA, in conjunction with the Southern New England Forest Consortium, held the first of five workshops **See the Forest<sup>sm</sup>** workshops in Thompson, Connecticut. **See the Forest<sup>sm</sup>** is a training program we designed to assist rural community volunteers in recognizing and capturing value from their local forest resource. This round of **See the Forest<sup>sm</sup>** includes communities from three states: Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. Each **See the Forest<sup>sm</sup>** session includes a workbook of information and resources specifically tailored to each state.

To refresh participants' knowledge of the contents of the first workbook, *Understanding Forest Health*, we created Forest Jeopardy. Like the TV show of the same name, Forest Jeopardy asked workshop participants to match questions with answers related to forest health. Topics included "Trees," "Healthy Forests," "Factors Influencing Forest Health," and "Abbreviations."

We found this to be a useful (and fun) tool for reviewing basic principles of forest health with workshop participants. The questions were simple enough that all attendees were able to participate while more knowledgeable players were able to share their insights as the game unfolded. By scheduling the game immediately following lunch, we achieved a gentle transition from conversation and food to the more serious work of planning and strategizing that took place during the afternoon.



### Just Another Fact You Should Know . . . . .

According to the Alaska Department of Fish and Game, while both male and female reindeer grow antlers in the summer each year, male reindeer drop their antlers at the beginning of winter, usually late November to mid-December. Female reindeer retain their antlers till after they give birth in the spring.

Therefore, according to every historical rendition depicting Santa's reindeer, every single one of them, from Rudolph to Blitzen...had to be a girl. We should have known. Only women would be able to drag a fat man in a red velvet suit all around the world in one night and not get lost.

Answers to Homophonics puzzler on Page  
1. reel, real  
2. bight, bite  
3. peal, peel  
4. rote, wrote



## NNFP National Community Forestry Center Northern Forest Region

*Yellow Wood Associates is currently completing our second year as administrator for the National Community Forestry Center, Northern Forest Region, a project of the National Network of Forest Practitioners. Over the four-year life of the project, approximately 60 percent of our overall staff time will be devoted to activities in support of community forestry and participatory research throughout the region that includes the states of Maine, Vermont, New York, and New Hampshire. A sample of our activities over the last few months is described below.*

### **Communities**

Five communities will receive targeted assistance from the Center over the coming year. The towns of Brighton, Lincoln, and Richford in Vermont; the Middle Ground Collaborative of Maine; and timber harvesting communities of New Hampshire and Vermont will each receive technical assistance from Center staff and partners to engage community residents in conducting research and up to \$7,000 to hire a local coordinator.

Members of northern New Hampshire and Vermont timber harvesting communities will study how recent changes in forest land ownership are impacting forest management, timber harvesting, and rural economies. The Towns of Brighton and Richford will gather information to assist in developing forest-based economic development strategies. The Town of Lincoln will engage local residents of all ages in gathering information to assist in creating a management plan for their municipal forest. The Middle Ground Collaborative has developed an interactive exhibit to tour the state in an attempt to generate dialogue about the history and future of Maine's forest resource. The Collaborative

will develop methods to effectively engage those who view the exhibit and create a running record of their responses.

All five communities will receive training in participatory research methods and facilitation in developing a work plan to complete their research. They have agreed to work with the Center to share their learning and results with other communities throughout the region.

### **Participatory Research Workshops**

Participatory research is more familiar to international development practitioners than to those working in rural communities here in the U.S., and goes by a long list of names with mind-numbing acronyms. According to our definition, participatory research is a democratic method for identifying information needs, and then producing, collecting, and analyzing information. While professional researchers sometimes play a role, community members themselves are engaged in the process of gaining and creating the knowledge they need.

An example is the Cobscook Bay Clam Restoration Project where local people figured out how to get the infor-

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mation they needed to document the health of the clam beds that provide part of their livelihood. The beds had been closed by state authorities concerned about over fishing. Members of the Cobscook Bay community learned that by collecting the data locally on an ongoing basis, they could show that the beds were healthy enough to sustain local fishing practices. In this example, the community identified the problem, worked with state agency personnel to develop acceptable research methods and documentation, collected the data themselves, and were effective in getting the clam beds reopened for fishing. A key characteristic of participatory research is that it is tied directly to decision-making and action.

The National Community Forestry Center, Northern Forest Region is currently offering a four-hour interactive workshop to promote a better understanding of participatory research methods. The workshop activities and materials present research methods as a continuum with minimum participation on one end and maximum participation on the other. Workshop participants share their own experiences with research and discuss when, why, and how it makes sense for those expected to use information to become active participants in the research process. We offer the workshops through partnerships with other organizations recruiting a mix of professional and academic researchers, technical assistance providers, and community volunteers to participate. We've found that inviting participants engaged in a wide variety of community issues leads to a very rich discussion.

We test-drove the workshop materials and format at the annual

meeting of the National Network of Forest Practitioners in Hoopa, California in September, 2001, and have subsequently held workshops in northern New York, Vermont, and New Hampshire. Our plans for the coming year include workshops in western New York, Vermont, and Maine. If you're interested in attending or helping to sponsor a workshop in your area, regardless of your location, please contact us.

### **Free Publications !!!!**

Publications listed below are available free from the National Community Forestry Center, Northern Forest Region. Contact us at 800-727-5404 or download them from our website, [www.ncfnfr.net](http://www.ncfnfr.net).

*What is Community Forestry and Why Does It Matter?*

*What is Participatory Research, and Why Does It Matter?*

*School-Based Forest Education in the Northern Forest*

*Community Forestry Made Real: Case Studies in Landowner Cooperation*

*The Story of the East Branch of Fish Creek Working Group in Tug Hill, New York*

*So, You're Thinking of Starting a Forest Landowner Co-Op?*

*Who's Planning for Forests?*

*What Does the Term "Working Forest" Mean To You?* (a full-color poster that will beautify your wall and invite reflection and discussion about the role of the forest in your life and livelihood)

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Please note our new street address, and  
plan to attend our OPEN HOUSE on  
Wednesday, February 13, 4-7 p.m.