

## Artist found inspiration in the power tool aisle

Kathy Sawada never thought she would become a crafts person. "I had never used or even considered wood as a medium for artistic expression," says Kathy, who was an accredited teacher and stay-at-home mother. "While passing time in yet another tool store waiting for Jim, my husband, to poke through all the available gizmos, I discovered the scroll saw."

Beginning with simple boxes, Kathy quickly set her sights on designing free form sculpted boxes with the use of a hand saw. "Those creations got me involved in an exhibition in Unionville which subsequently involved me in some fundraisers which didn't have any relationship to my hand saw boxes but sent me off into completely new directions," explains Kathy. One event required Kathy to convert a rough-hewn milking stool into a work of art while another posed a similar challenge using a framed mirror. "My works were a hit but I couldn't build the underlying benches and frames," admits Kathy.

"Enter Jim's cabinet-making skills and the rest, as they say, is history."

Three years after venturing into the craft field, the Sawadas became full-time craftspeople in 2002. "Research, experimentation and imagination keeps us moving along on the road of discovery," Kathy says about the puzzle-top benches with coordinating mirrors, boxes, pegboards, chalkboards and picture frames that the couple creates. "One of the things that is the most fun in this line of work is that we never know what will be created next!"

All the items are designed and made by this husband and wife team. With precision cutting and sound joinery techniques, Jim builds all the benches and frames from solid pine. Kathy does all the designing, cutting, staining, painting and finishing. The Sawadas enjoy all aspects of their work but there are artistic and practical challenges to solve. "Always coming up with new ideas and designs is part of it. Then, we must try different marketing

venues for the work until we find the ones that work best for us," explains Kathy. "Having had so much positive and joyful reaction to our work, however, makes it easy to keep going and to create new and fun pieces."

Kathy and Jim Sawada will be showing their puzzle benches, mirrors, candleholders and other fun-spirited work at Muskoka Arts & Crafts' 41st Summer Show. "Last year was our first time at this show. The locale was great, the show was well attended and the camaraderie that we experienced was a real pleasure," says Kathy who will be one of 180 creative artists and craftspeople from Muskoka, Ontario and other provinces of Canada.

Muskoka Arts & Crafts' 41st annual Summer Show takes place on July 18, 19 and 20 at Annie Williams Memorial Park, located near the intersection of Santa's Village Road and Wellington Street in Bracebridge. Hours are Friday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. until 5 p.m. Admission is by donation and the parking is free. For more information about the show, visit Muskoka Arts & Crafts' Web site at [www.muskokaartsandcrafts.com](http://www.muskokaartsandcrafts.com) or call 705-645-5501.

**PUZZLING PIECE.** Kathy Sawada's artistic inspiration came from a scroll saw, and the tool still plays an important part in the work she and her husband Jim produce. They will have their puzzle benches and other works at the Muskoka Arts and Crafts Summer

