



Carpentry

by Leonard Koel, Alsip, Ill.: American Technical Publishers, 1985. 695pages; \$17.95 paperback or \$34.95 hardcover.

by Paul Hanke

If your old carpentry book is starting to look a little worn and you're searching for a replacement, *Carpentry* may be the ideal candidate.

This hefty newcomer is likely to offer some stiff competition to old standards like Durbahn & Sundberg's two-volume *Fundamentals of Carpentry* or Willis Wagner's *Modern Carpentry*.

Koel covers both residential/light carpentry and heavy construction in 695 informative, illustration-packed pages. Exhaustive in scope and treatment, it discusses virtually everything a beginning carpenter needs to know.

The first 274 pages—40 percent of the book—are devoted to common materials, hand and power tools, construction equipment, leveling, concrete work, safety and blueprint-reading. The balance of the book provides detailed and well-illustrated guidance on everything from floor framing to trim work.

Written at the level of a basic trade-school text, each chapter includes several pages of step-by-step instructions for

Exhaustive in scope and treatment, this book covers everything a beginning carpenter needs to know.

various phases of the work at hand. Photos are adequate, and with one major shortcoming—the use of bright orange ink to highlight every drawing, which I found very distracting—drawings are clear and easy to understand.

Practical instructions get right down to the nitty gritty—such as how to test your level for accuracy, avoiding "dip" at the ends of your plane strokes, laying out your first stud space $\frac{3}{4}$ " less than the o.c. spacing, using "strongbacks" in ceiling framing and even making various knots and hitches.

Limitations include the material on reading blueprints, which suffers from a lack of real examples, and the discussion of roof framing. While Koel devotes five chapters to all types of roof construction, I prefer the treatment of this subject in other books—especially *Roof Framing* by Marshall Gross, which was reviewed in the May '85 issue of *NEB*.

Signs of the times include photos of women carpenters scattered throughout the book and special sections devoted to energy conservation and solar energy.

The chapter on solar energy is mostly eyewash with little practical information to offer, but its presence acknowledges that solar construction has crept into mainstream building.

The coverage of energy conservation also is very limited, and it's flawed by not considering the possible drawbacks of foam sheathing (*i.e.*, how it can create exterior vapor dams or cause horizontal wood siding laid over it to buckle). The use of radiant barriers to prevent summer overheating also is ignored, as is the use of Tyvek as an infiltration barrier.

On the other hand, the chapter on post-and-beam construction is as good as you'll find anywhere, and other esoterica, such as pole framing, find a small niche in the text to supplement the more conventional techniques that rightly form the core of the book.

To Koel's credit, he shows several typical details, introducing the beginning carpenter to various construction techniques.

Finally, there's an excellent glossary that includes a nifty selection of "trade tips." (I'd argue that the tips would have been better scattered in appropriate places throughout the main text for easy reference, however.)

Overall, I was impressed with *Carpentry*. I'd definitely spring for the hardcover edition, though, as the paperback is likely to self-destruct under heavy use. ■