

St. Louis Woodworkers Guild



March 2010
Issue 300

Our Next Meeting

Thursday 7:00 PM
March 18, 2010

Creve Coeur Government
Center, 300 N. Ballas Rd.
Creve Coeur, MO

Biannual Show and Tell with Silent Auction.

The next meeting, on Thursday, March 18th, will take place at the Creve Coeur Gov't Center (see address above) from 7:00 PM to 9:00 PM. Bring along your show and tell items and share your progress over the last two years! Everyone should bring a dish or snack to share; John Wetter will provide beverages.

This year the Guild will also be hosting a silent auction. If you plan on bringing anything to sell, the doors will be open at 6:00 PM. You must have any auction items brought to the Creve Coeur Gov't Center by 6:30 PM at the latest. There is a limit of 5 items, though they can be boxed lots if you can group some things together. If you have big machinery to sell, please just bring pictures and a good description of the item. For more information about the silent auction, contact Wayne Watson at 314-846-1172.

www.stlwoodworkersguild.org

Making a Windsor Chair, Part 2

February 18th, 2010

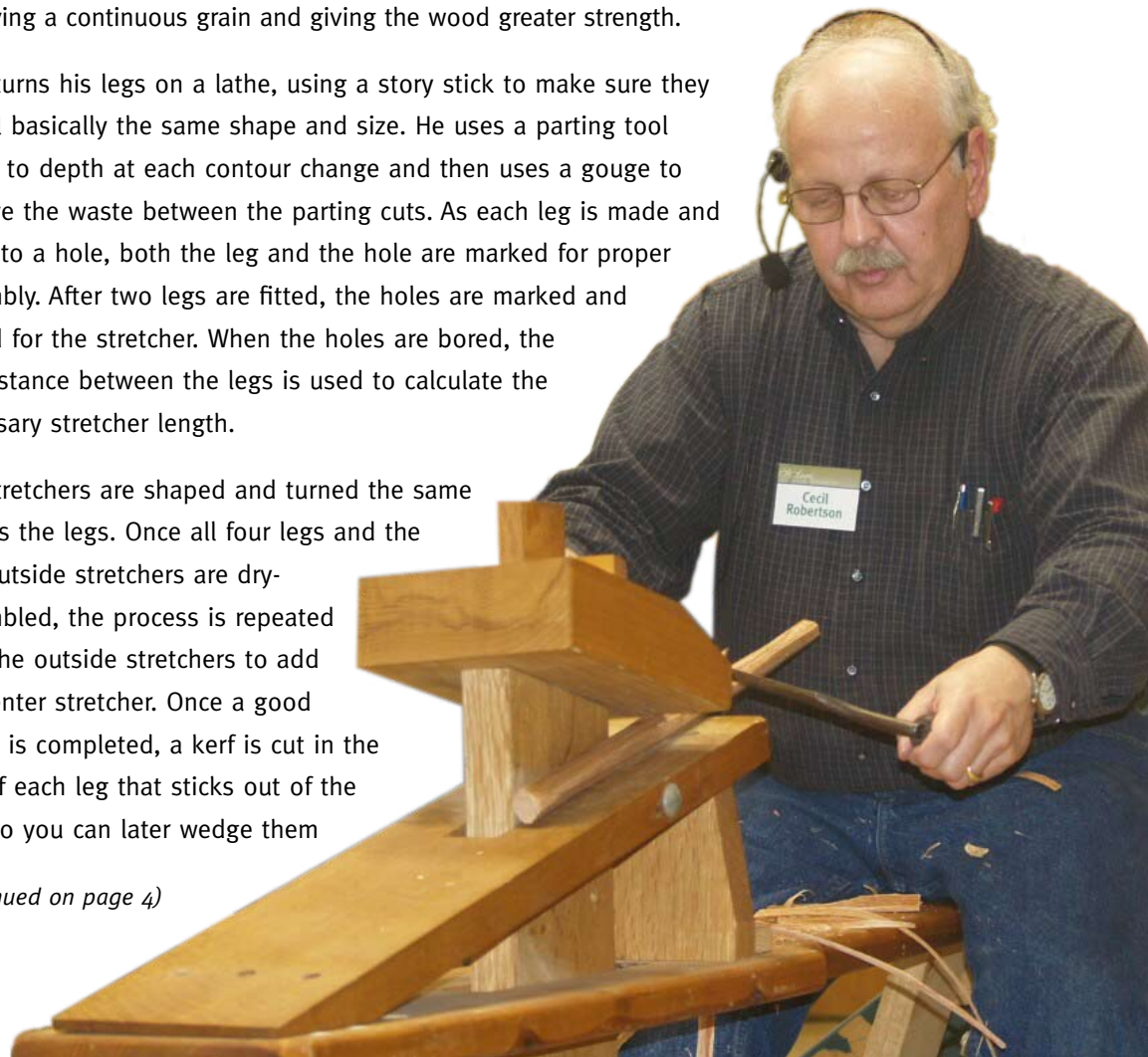
At the February guild meeting, Cecil Robertson played the role of presenter once again to give us the second half of his two-part presentation on making a Windsor chair. Back in September of last year, he discussed the formation of the seat, from gluing up the seat blank to drilling the spindle and leg holes to shaping it with an adze, scoops, and a scorp. This time, he wanted to focus on turning the spindles, stretchers, and legs, the best methods for leg assembly, and steam bending the one-piece arm to shape.

With a brief review of using the taper bit to bore through the leg holes in the seat, Cecil grabbed a red oak blank and discussed turning the legs themselves. The best time to prepare your leg and spindle blanks is when the wood is still green. Then, you can much more easily rive the wood, achieving a continuous grain and giving the wood greater strength.

Cecil turns his legs on a lathe, using a story stick to make sure they are all basically the same shape and size. He uses a parting tool to cut to depth at each contour change and then uses a gouge to remove the waste between the parting cuts. As each leg is made and fitted to a hole, both the leg and the hole are marked for proper assembly. After two legs are fitted, the holes are marked and drilled for the stretcher. When the holes are bored, the full distance between the legs is used to calculate the necessary stretcher length.

The stretchers are shaped and turned the same way as the legs. Once all four legs and the two outside stretchers are dry-assembled, the process is repeated with the outside stretchers to add the center stretcher. Once a good dry fit is completed, a kerf is cut in the end of each leg that sticks out of the seat so you can later wedge them

(continued on page 4)



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Toy Committee Chairmen:
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Steve Briner 636.922.1947

Sponsors

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314.993.0413

The Wood & Shop
2650 Metro Blvd.
314.731.2761

St. Charles Hardwoods
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Rockler Woodworking & Hardware
314.209.1116

Hydraflow Equipment Co.
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314.621.7711

Meeting Room, Mailing Address
Courtesy of Woodcraft

Scott's Thoughts – Just Stain It!

January 2010

It's no big deal if the color isn't exactly what you are looking for, you can always stain it, right? Seems simple enough. Plenty of store-bought cabinetry is hard maple stained to the color of your choice. Well, that is the easy part – picking out the color. After that, the actual staining of the maple is the difficult part, especially if you want your project to look good. The problems are many and the solutions are few and the ones that exist still take special care to execute smoothly.

I warn everyone that is planning on staining their maple project about the difficulties and I try to steer them away from it. If they want a darker look, I recommend that they simply use a darker wood or a wood that stains easier. Usually the answer is that they want a wood with close-grained structure, not an open-grain structure like oak or even walnut. You know, wood but without the wood look. Then I try to show them the beauty of natural cherry, but they still usually want it darker too. So, off to staining maple we go.

Here are the main issues with a standard oil-based (Minwax) stain on maple:

- 1) Maple doesn't take stain evenly.
- 2) Maple doesn't take enough stain to make darker colors.
- 3) Maple is difficult to sand without showing scratches in the stain.

I have tried many different methods to achieve an even, darker color, without showing scratches and have it down to two methods. Method 1 leaves the maple in the equation. Method 2 takes the maple out of the equation. Both require a spray application and some practice.

For both methods careful sanding to 150/180, with the grain, is important. Endgrain requires special focus to make sure that it is sanded completely. It will suck up much more stain than the face grain and should be sanded until it has a nice even sheen.

Method 1

In this method the raw maple is stained first with a gel stain to bring out the figure of the wood. It will not darken the maple completely. The smoothly sanded face grain will take very little stain and, if sanded properly, the endgrain will also take very little. This step will show how poorly you sanded. If it looks blotchy in some areas, it can be sanded again for consistency. Do not try to build up to a final color in this step, it is only to help show the grain.

After the stain dries, spray two coats of sanding sealer, and lightly sand or scrape with a razor blade between coats.

After the sealer is dry, it is time for the topcoats. At this point your color will look washed out and sickly and in need of help. Simply mix some dye stain (I use TransTint) with your topcoat. This is officially called "Shading". You'll want to mix the dye stain so that it takes two coats to achieve your final color. This will help eliminate stripes when you spray, which will happen if you put down a strong color in one coat. This part takes practice, but is well worth it. It produces a deep, rich, even finish that can't be achieved with a can of stain.

Method 2

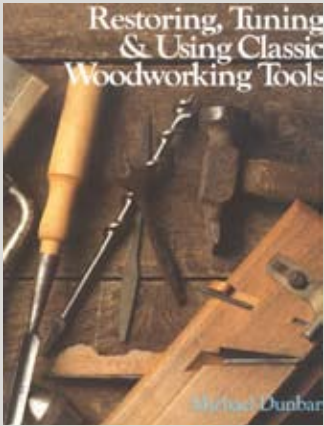
This method is similar to Method 1, but the gel-stain step is eliminated. This method achieves an even finish, but doesn't show the grain of the wood as much and doesn't create as much depth. It is commonly used in the furniture and cabinet industries for a consistent finish with the least amount of fuss and has an added benefit in that can be adjusted before any topcoats have been applied.

After careful sanding, mix your color choice of dye stain with turpentine. Mix it in a fashion that will require at least two coats to achieve your final color. This mixture is then sprayed to stain the wood. The turpentine will stay wet long enough so that you can see what your color looks like, but will not soak in deeply. This avoids the blotchiness of stain color that you are trying to avoid. There are many dye stains available premixed and alcohol-based, but I have found these to dry so quickly that it is hard to gauge what your color actually looks like since the first pass is dry before you come back for your second pass. The medium/slow drying solvent is the key here.

After the stain is applied, you can finish as normal with sanding sealer and the topcoats of your choice.

You can use both of these methods on all hard to stain woods (especially cherry), for a consistent finish. They both require practice because the spray stain must be evenly applied, but there are very few ways to achieve an even staining otherwise. Good luck and happy spraying!

Scott



How many tools do you own? No, don't answer that (at least not on paper where your wife might see it!). Instead, ask yourself how many tools you have that might need to be fettled or tuned in order to work properly. If you are anything like me, you'll need more than two hands to tally up that number. Whether they are the latest estate sale finds or tools handed down from your father or grandfather, second-hand tools are an economical and practical way of outfitting your woodworking shop. Except for the highest quality tools, even brand new tools are going to need a little tuning and sharpening before you can put them to work. This makes a book on restoring, tuning, and using hand tools

an essential book to have in your library, and Michael Dunbar's book is one of the best I've found so far.

In the first section, Michael provides you with basic tool information, some buying guidelines, and tips for selecting the proper tools. Knowing this most basic section well will pay dividends later on as you avoid struggling to tune an inferior tool or buy a tool with hard-to-find missing parts.

The chapters on tuning, cleaning, and refinishing tools are quite useful. Michael first discusses the difference between cleaning and refinishing, and when you should do one and not the other. His chapter on heating techniques is especially useful if you find yourself making new irons for moulding planes or fixing broken chisel tips. Although his chapter on sharpening isn't nearly as thorough as Leonard Lee's or Ron Hock's books on the same subject, it does provide you a good starting point.

The bulk of Michael's book, however, is a focus on all of the varying kinds and styles of hand planes. Separate chapters cover the three different forms of bench planes – wooden, transitional, and all-metal. Five more chapters are devoted to specialized planes, from moulding planes to scrapers and scratch stocks.

The last section of the book covers miscellaneous tools – chisels and gouges, saws, and braces and bits. He readily admits to not going into as much detail in these sections, but he does manage to highlight the important parts, including selecting and reconditioning chisels, sharpening a saw, and the proper way to use a brace and bit.

The nice thing about a book on restoring hand tools is that the methods and techniques discussed will never change. The techniques discussed in 1998 will be just as valid in 2018. As far as I know, this book is not in the Guild's library, and I don't believe it is currently in print, so you'll have to check the local library or start keeping your eyes peeled for it the next time you're picking up an old tool at an estate sale!

Library Reminders

The books, magazines, and tools of the library are there for the benefit of all of the guild members. Please keep that in mind as you check materials out and try to return them in a timely manner.

Announcements

Faust Park Restoration Projects

While things haven't progressed very much over the past few months, we are still planning on working with Faust Park to help preserve St. Louis County history. This is a great opportunity to keep your existing skills sharp and learn some new ones along the way! For more information, contact Scott Wunder via email at wunderwoods@sbcglobal.net.

The SLWG board members are looking for ideas. Are there any community projects in your area where guild members could offer their assistance? Do you know of any ways in which the guild could do something to better your community? Think about it! And if something comes to mind, please contact Scott Wunder, President, at 314-731-2484.

Toy Report

There were 224 items delivered to the hospitals in February. The grand total of toys distributed since 1994 is 30,120! Please check out the guild's calendar on the website for items needed for upcoming events. Easter and patriotic items will be needed by the March meeting. For more information, contact John Patton at 314-843-0616 or Steve Briner at 636-922-1947).

Other Notes

About 10 members showed up for the Kurt Herrmann shop tour in February. All stayed for several hours, helping make a whole lot of toys. An exact number of how many toys were made is unknown, but it was probably less than 800.

There were 63 total attendees at the February meeting. Nine of these people were guests, many of whom found out about the guild as a result of the St. Louis Woodworking Show. Three new members joined the guild at this meeting, as well!

Making a Windsor Chair, Part 2 (cont)

in place. Final assembly is done with hide glue. The legs are then glued and wedged into the seat and the ends cut flush with a chisel or saw.

You don't want this to be a rocking chair, so it is important that all four legs are the same length. To do this, determine which leg is the longest. Set the three shorter legs on a flat surface (such as your table saw) and mark and trim the long leg.

To shape the spindles, Cecil uses a shave horse. In order to keep from having to remove the spindle and take it over to the chair for fitting, he keeps a small block of wood handy that is the thickness of the thickest part of the spindle and has holes sized to the proper dimensions for the top and bottom of the spindle to fit into. He periodically uses this block to make sure the spindle is the right thickness at these important points.

When shaping the spindles, he first uses a draw knife to make flat sides on the blank. Then he knocks down the corners of the square to make it octagonal. He further knocks down those corners to make it even more round. Eventually, you end up with a round blank. A notch in the saw horse helps to hold the blank at this point. Once you get it to a rough shape, switch to a spokeshave to refine it even more. Cecil sets the blade of the spokeshave so one end is more shallow than the other. This allows him to take thinner or thicker shavings as necessary without switching spokeshaves or constantly adjusting the tool. Once all of the spindles are made and fitted, he moves on to the arm.

Again, the wood is rived for grain continuity and strength; this also avoids major splits when the wood is bent. The wood is steamed in a steam box (one hour per inch of thickness), pulled from the box and bent around a form designed to put the shape in the arm. You must move quickly as you only have about a minute or two before the wood is no longer flexible. Once put into form, Cecil usually leaves it there for a few days. Fractures at the elbow bend are shaved off with a spokeshave and the arms are further shaped as desired.



With the spindles in the seat, holes are marked off on the arm and bored, usually with spoon bits. The hardest holes to drill are closest to the elbow because of the angle of the necessary angle. Seat the arm onto the spindles and adjust as necessary. Finally, glue the spindles into the seat and then the arm onto the spindles.

Unfortunately, time ran out at that point, so Cecil just had a minute to discuss sanding the chair smooth in preparation for milk paint or varnish. If you want to get more information on this final step, he said he would be happy to discuss it with you in person. He can be reached at cecil.robertson@usa.net.



The Show...

Keith Lissant passed around several glass ornaments with wooden fishing lures inside them. Tell us how you did it, Keith!

Norm Stoecker brought in a scraping plane he made by hand. It has a wooden body and a wedge that bows the blade just like you would do to a scraper with your thumbs.

The last time he was at Hibdon Hardwoods, Steve Briner picked up two potato sacks of scrap mahogany. From those scraps, he made two mantle clocks. In addition to material and labor costs, he'll need to clear another \$25 to make up for the parking ticket he received while getting the wood.

Jeff Nasser, one of our new members, showed everyone a pepper mill he made out of African blackwood and pink ivory and cigar pens made of cocobolo and OSB (oriented strand board).

In honor of Valentine's Day, Vic Barr brought in a heart-shaped box made from cocobolo with rosewood and holly accents.

2010 Woodworking Show

This year's woodworking show in Collinsville was a success once again. Many woodworkers stopped by the booth to chat and many visited the guild meeting in February after talking with us at the show. Seven woodworkers signed up as new members. Our booth has in recent years been in the hallway at the show and last year was even by the back door. We couldn't complain about the placement this year. Our booth was in the main area and in close proximity to Hydraflow, which always has a lot of shoppers. This year we took for granted that we would have plenty of display items, but many members felt like we could have made a better showing. Next year we will make sure to dazzle the crowds with even more projects. Overall, it was a great event for the guild, especially for the price (free). Thanks to everyone that helped man the booth.

...And the Tell

Roger Branson had a box elder board with unusual bark inclusions in it and he wanted to know if anyone knew what might have caused them. Nobody had any good answers (though some creative ones were offered...)

David Parker is looking for a wood lathe if anyone has one for sale.

Bob Colegate announced the guild's 25th year anniversary was that night! He also said a nominating committee has been formed that includes Mark Koritz, Don Snyder, Bob Colegate, and John Wetter. The new board will be selected later this year, so contact one of these guild members soon if you would like to be on the board or if you want to nominate someone else.



Norm Stoecker

Calendar of Upcoming Events

Saturday, March 20th and Sunday, March 21st

This is the weekend of the Frank Klausz jewelry box class at the American Woodworking Academy. The class is sold out, but if you are interested in being on the standby list, please contact Jim Hoeller at 314-721-2245.

Thursday, April 15th

Mike Jones is going to give a presentation on building and restoring historic handrails.

Thursday, May 20th

Boris Khechoyan will discuss carving details in your furniture projects. Boris is master carver who teaches woodcarving in south county.

Thursday, June 17th

Rich Petty will drive down from Mexico, MO, to talk about his company, Greener Lumber. He will have samples of reclaimed old grown lumber from South America.

**Frank Klausz Class
March 20th and 21st, 2010**

The Frank Klausz class is completely sold out! We have 15 participants all paid in full and Frank's plane ticket purchased. Good luck to everyone who will be attending the class! We'll expect to see some boxes during the April meeting Show and Tell!

Membership Application

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Occupation _____

Type of woodworking you enjoy _____

E-mail address _____

Where did you obtain this application and learn about this Guild?

*If you would like to join the St. Louis Woodworkers Guild please attend our next meeting or mail this application and your check for \$25 for one years dues to:
St. Louis Woodworkers Guild, 2077 Congressional Drive, St. Louis, MO 63146.*

