

Northern Woods

The Newsletter of the Minnesota Woodworkers Guild, Est. 1982

Volume: 136

Issue: December 2011 - January 2012

Fall Seminar - Marquetry with Paul Schurch

For woodworkers, marquetry is the art using inlaid veneers to create an image to decorate a furniture piece. Paul Schurch, the speaker at the 2011 Fall Seminar has an international reputation for his marquetry work. He demonstrated the processes he uses during a fantastic weekend training session for Guild members.

[Full Story](#)



Woodworking in America: Ultimate Joinery Weekend

Bob Bridigum has been listening to the buzz about Woodworking in America for the last few years. He decided to find out for himself if it was as good as everyone said.



[Full Story](#)

President's Notes

The Guild's Board of Directors has undergone a few changes. Find out who will be president come the new year....

[Full Story](#)

What's On Your Bench? - Woodburning

Richard Tendick has brought some non-traditional tools into his shop for this latest woodworking foray. Items like an automotive battery charger and toaster wire. Caution, this activity involves high heat.



[Full Story](#)

Woodworking on the Web

It spins, it twirls, it goes up and down while singing clickety clack, clickety clack. If you are looking for a great gift idea for your child or grandchild and are wondering what to do with your small wood scraps, this is for you.

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Member Discounts

One of the benefits of membership in the Minnesota Woodworkers Guild is discounts at many suppliers of wood, tools, finishes and more!

<http://www.mnwwg.org/discounts.html>

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Woodworking in America: Ultimate Joinery Weekend

Story by Bob Bridigum

Photos by Bob Bridigum

Intro to WIA Show

Seven hundred and ten miles door-to-door and I'm finally in Kentucky, right across the river from Cincinnati, none the worse for wear, except for a sore rear end that has molded to the shape of my car seat from twelve hours of nearly continuous pounding. Tomorrow is the first day of the Woodworking In America (WIA) "Ultimate Joinery Weekend". After listening to Jeff Hand and Mike Siemsen rave about this event for two years, I just had to check it out.

WIA did not disappoint. Four hundred plus attendees and I were treated to total immersion in hand tool working for two and a half days. The program consisted of eight tracks running simultaneously containing a total of sixty four presentations and demonstrations by very well known woodworkers. There was just no way to see it all, or as it turned out even half because the ninth track was the "Market Place". More on that later.

Initially I thought, "must choose wisely". Later after talking to fellow woodworkers it became clear "just choose anything at all" because it was all great. What follows are some ramblings about the sessions I choose and the people I met.

Ron Herman - Combination Planes

More than 15 years ago I bought a Stanley 45 that I located on e-bay. Bought it direct from the owner, like new in the original box with all the parts, cheap. When the plane came, I unpacked it, tried to set it up and use it - unsuccessfully. Put it back in the box and up on the shelf where it has been ever since. You can imagine how thrilled I was to find this two hour demonstration of the Stanley 45 and 55 by Ron Herman.

Ron is the fifth generation owner/manager of Antiquity Builders of Ohio, a 107 year old company that does historically accurate restoration projects using traditional hand tools and techniques. Around nine employees work for him depending on how much business there is and even with the economy in the tank, Ron's crew is currently working on three sites simultaneously. Ron started working in the business at the age of eight and yes, his Dad was his master when he apprenticed.

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Antiquity Builders use Stanley 45s and 55s to make traditional moldings on the job site. They'll have six or so of each plane set up for different cuts and run them like an assembly line, creating intricate crown molding on a 20 foot board. They end up with an exact copy of the original 19th century piece, made using the same techniques as the original. That would be a sight to behold.

Ron took the planes apart and explained the function of each piece, showed us how to set them up, and best of all we got to give them a test drive. It was nothing like my attempt 15 years ago. These planes actually work.

A Stanley 55 is a 45 on steroids. "Some engineer at Stanley had too much time on his hands and put his effort into make the most complicated device he could think of", said Ron. There are a couple of extra things the 55 can do like run at an angle to the work (called spring).



Assortment of Stanley planes



Stanley model 55



Standard molding cutter #106

If you have ever looked closely at one of these planes you have seen the numbers engraved on each blade.

These numbers are to molding what Pantone is to colors. Moldings were standardized in the early 1900s so you could order a 106 molding from Sears and they would make it for you. The profile is exactly the same as the 106 blade of the Stanley combination planes. The molding numbers are the same today.

Ron's most notable yet printable quote was: "After the age of 50 you get up in the morning and spin the wheel of pain to see what is going to hurt today for no good reason". His unprintable quote was about Tool Collectors.

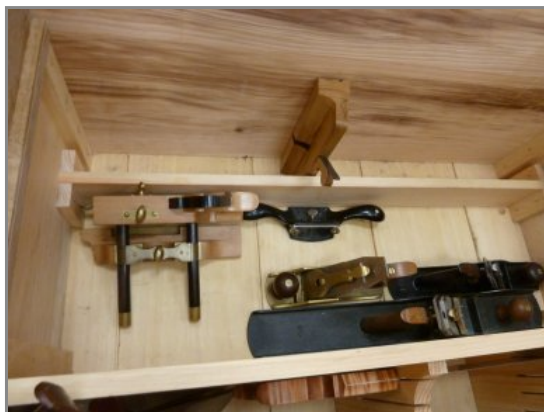
Christopher Schwarz - 12 Rules for Traditional Tools Chests

Chris Schwarz is always entertaining, knowledgeable, and often opinionated. He started his talk by calling Benjamin Seaton “a spoiled brat”. In 1796 Ben’s father went out and bought him a complete set of cabinetmaker’s tools. Ben built a tool chest to house them all, closed the lid and went off to “pursue other interests”. The tools were never used, talk about brand new in the box! The tool chest stayed in the family until 1910 when it was given to a museum - so 215 years later we have the best representation of 18th century cabinet maker’s tools that exist today.



“It is a good thing he never used the tool chest because it would fall apart”, said Chris as an introduction to tool chest design. Chris is a great researcher, always starting with a spreadsheet. He investigated the design of many traditional tool chests, including Seaton’s. His talk was about why the chests were built the way they were, not about how to build them. “Nothing here was done by

accident”, said Chris. For instance the chests are all about the same length, not surprisingly the length of the longest tool. The height was such that it could be used as an assembly surface or saw bench in a pinch. The depth was determined from the longest comfortable (no back strain) reach of the cabinet maker from the front of the chest to the bottom rear compartment.



Compartments for all the tools, no French Fitting

A complete set of molding planes fit in the rear compartment, toe down (so the blades don’t fall out). All the profiles are easy to see from above. The saw till was in front and raised off the floor to keep the saws from rusting. The middle compartment housed all the other plane like objects.



Three drawers stacked on slides

The chest also contained two or three drawers, on slides, for easy access to the content. The drawers held all the remaining tools like chisels, marking, gauges, hammers, etc. If you are interested in any of this, Chris has written a book on the traditional tool chest. I bought one and spent too much time reading it one night because I couldn't put it down. The book reads just like Chris talks. It is very entertaining. You can get the book at Chris's new company, ["Lost Art Press"](#). There is also a DVD.



Chris Schwarz holding forth after the talk. No one wanted to leave

The Market Place and Hand Tool Olympics

"Abandon hope all ye who enter here in" goes through my mind every time I enter the Market Place. There are over 50 suppliers of tools here, mostly hand tools. You can test drive most everything. There were only a couple of lonely power tools vendors and you couldn't use any of their product. Bad Axe, Blue Spruce, Brese Planes, Bridge City and on and on were all here. These folks make tools that are often works of art - translation, very fine and very expensive. Lost Art Press had a booth also where I met Chris and his wife and bought his new book, *Anarchist's Tool Chest*.

By far the best part of the Market Place for me was to meet Larry Williams and Don McDonnell of Old Street Tools (formerly Clarke and Williams). These guys make the finest 18th century style wooden molding planes you can buy. Colonial Williamsburg has and uses nearly 400 of their planes. Don and Larry make all the planes by hand in the British style prevalent in the late 1700's. For more than 10 years I've coveted a set of hollows and rounds (now \$3,400) and have settled for buying their DVDs. I found out the current waiting list is more than two years long. I could be dead by then!

After chatting for awhile it must have become clear I am a fan because Don asked me if I'd be interested in a beading plane. They had just finished a run and had one extra that they brought to the show. Needless to say I bought it on the spot. After a 15 minute private lesson with Don I could actually use the plane correctly, effortlessly producing a 1/4 bead on the edge of a three foot board. I'm in heaven.

Hand Tool Olympics

The other high point of the Market Place was Mike Siemsen's Hand Tool Olympics. Mike and nine other woodworkers from the Society of Period Furniture Makers and the Minnesota Woodworkers Guild manage the event. They hauled a van load of equipment all the way from Minnesota and set up for a friendly contest of hand tools skills including boring, rip & cross cut sawing, dove tails, jointing the edge of the board you just ripped, and cutting tenons. All events are timed, scores kept, and prizes awarded. I didn't win anything but did rip a three foot long board in 23 seconds, mostly straight and square.. What a sweet saw.



The author and Jeff Hand give the two man veneer saw a go

Jeff Hand showed me how to use a two man veneer saw made at Mike Siemsen's School. It was a lot harder than it looked especially from my end. Jeff chose the guide end and gave me the power end.

Late on Saturday I swung by the Hand Tool Olympics area and found this guy cutting his dove tails for the contest. He was using a hack saw and screwdriver. Un freaken believable. The tip of the screwdriver had been honed but so what.

Who could do this? His name is Rob Cosman. Yep, the guy with dozens of YouTube videos and DVDs. A group of us stood spellbound as first the tails and then the pins took shape. We held our collective breaths as the two pieces were fit together perfectly. Guess I need more practice. Never thought of using a screwdriver. Could that be the secret?

It turns out that Rob had just stopped by Mike Siemsen's booth to chat when he noticed a set of marginal looking tools Mike keeps out to make the point that good quality woodworking - dovetails even - can be accomplished with out investing a lot of money. With an \$8 hacksaw, a \$2 screwdriver (sharpened like a chisel) a block of wood used to pound the chisel, and a virtually free marking gauge (a scrap of wood with a protruding nail) a person can turn out some very fine dovetails - as Rob Cosman demonstrated. Mike says that a number of other less experienced and certainly less famous woodworkers have had equally good results using his low cost dovetail kit.



*Rob Cosman cutting dovetails
w/screwdriver*



*Mike's low cost dovetail kit &
Rob's nearly perfect dovetail*

Roy Underhill – Panel & Frame by hand methods

The room was full, the hour was approaching and in walks Roy Underhill playing a hand saw. In the next class I found out how bad that is for saw tensioning, but that was later. Roy is best known for his 30 year run on PBS's Woodwright's Shop. He is credited with doing more to promote woodworking without modern machines than perhaps any other person. He is a celebrity for sure but he is also warm and sharing, more like one of us than someone famous.



The room was full mostly because Roy is famous but also because things are always happening around Roy. I know for a fact that at least one person in the audience had a stash of bandages just in case. Roy's tools are sharp and his demonstrations are sometimes interrupted by blood letting. He kept pretending to cut himself just to keep us on the edge of our seats.



Roy Cutting tenons, no back saw



Plane-Cam in action

His presentation was better than the T.V. show, funnier, and interactive. Roy's camera work was the best in the WIA show. He even gave us a planes eye view of the work as he went through the steps required to build a frame and panel. That is some trick, operating a hand plane one handed while holding a video camera in the other.

Roy holding a piece of the Roubo bench

Then it happened! Roy Underhill broke Chris Schwarz's Roubo Bench, the one featured in the Aug. 2010 issue of Popular Woodworking. He was hammering in a holdfast when the bench let go. This became the most talked about event at this year's WIA show. When it happened the whole room held its breath. Roy just stood their staring at the piece on the floor. No one could believe what just happened. Roy picked up the piece and pointed out that the failure occurred along a punk line in the top that Chris had talked about filling with epoxy in the article. Roy then passed the piece around so we could all see. The piece did not come back. Roy pleaded with the audience to give the piece back "so the bench could be repaired". Really, he was worried about the piece of Chris's Roubo Bench ending up on e-bay. Yes, Chris and Roubo have become that well known.

Ron Herman - Saw Sharpening Demystified

I thought a saw buck was slang for a one dollar bill. That may be true but a buck is also a portable box containing around a dozen hand saws. A till is a fixed box (mounted in the shop) full of 100 hand saws for a full set. If you call these by the



wrong name, Ron will tell you about it. He did this many times during the two hour demo of saw sharpening, including the time at the end for some hands on.

A Saw Buck



Assuming your eyes haven't glazed over yet, read on. Ron started with the basics, the shape of the teeth on rip and cross cut saws and why they are the way they are. Starting with the ugliest looking saw he showed us how to joint the teeth (level them) and then file the correct shape. All the while he is telling us what things are called. Sharpening was next, then set. Ron doesn't like much set since it makes the saw harder to control. He recommends very little and only on the 1st half. Finally he tensioned the saw. When he was done, the saw cut so effortlessly, so straight - almost like magic.



Ron sharpening teeth

Ron has hundreds of hand saws, using them everyday in his business, Antiquity Builders. Why so many you might wonder?. Some of the variables include: rip or crosscut, hard or softwood, teeth per inch, saw length, and thrust (the angle the handle makes with the body of the saw). It easily takes 100 saws to include all the important variations.

So how long should a saw be, you didn't ask. Here is how to size a saw. Stand with your arm stretched out parallel to the floor. Measure the distance from your shoulder (where the shotgun goes) and the crook of your index finger on your out stretched arm. That is the length of a saw that fits you. When they don't fit, they pull out of the work or hit the floor when you are using them.

Mostly what I got out of the two hours with Ron was a new vocabulary and a sense of how much there is to know, that I don't. Thank goodness Mike Siemsen runs a saw sharpening class right here in town.

Robert Lang - SketchUp Essentials and Gold Mine

To wrap up, the last three hours were spent learning how to really use SketchUp for woodworking. Robert Lang is a senior editor for Popular Woodworking. I watched Bob make parts and complete models with amazing ease. He did something in two minutes that took me 40 minutes to do the first time. He showed many things I'm not going to bore you with (sigh of relief?) but here are two key tips.

- Navigate with the mouse buttons
- Learn keystroke short cuts (6)

Last thing, Robert has a DVD so I can practice anywhere I have my computer.

So, would I do it again? That is a resounding yes, even if I have to drive all the way by myself. I'm hoping this article will inspire a few of you to make the trek with me. Guarantee it won't disappoint.

Bob Bridigum
Program Committee Chair

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Upcoming Meetings

December 14th: Vacuum Bag Techniques
Speaker: Jeff Anderson of Phoenix Wood

NOTE THAT THIS MEETING IS ON A WEDNESDAY.

After a fantastic Fall Seminar with Paul Schurch who taught us his veneering and vacuum bag techniques, come to the December meeting and discover what else vacuum can do for you! Learn the advantages of using a vacuum bag in the forming of bent panels and bent wood laminations. What types of glue are available and their applications. Form building, as well as some applications of vacuum that have nothing to do with bending and veneering panels together.

Date: Wednesday, December 14th

Time: 6:30 pm.

Location: Richfield Community Center in their lower level. The address is 7000 Nicollet Ave. S.

January 17th, 2012: Saw Making Demystified
Speaker: Mike Siemsen of Mike Siemsen's School of Woodworking

Mike will talk about hand saw technology and saw making. Mike will discuss the different aspects of saws and how they work. He will demonstrate saw sharpening and actually make a full saw at the meeting. At the end of the meeting we will put the saw to work demonstrating correct hand saw techniques. This will be a great prequel to February's meeting - Hand Tool Olympics.

Location for Saw Making Demystified is still being determined. Watch for an email blast prior to the meeting or check the Guild website.

Meeting will start at 6:30 pm.

February - Hand Tool Olympics, Forest Products

Watch for additional information.

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March 1st Bonus Meeting at Gabberts

Mike Danial, Stickley Corporate Historian, has created a new presentation solely for the Woodworkers Guild of Minnesota called, “The Good, The Bad and The Ugly”. Mike will comb through the thousands of images of furniture sent to him over the past decades and the group will be tasked with determining which ones belong in which category. If you like being a critic of other people’s woodwork but don’t like to have them around while you’re doing it, you’re going to love this!

Details about the meeting time and place will be sent out prior to the event

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Welcome to these new members:

Linda Scott
Aaron McGuire
Len Siegler
Garry Senn
George Rovolis
Michael Kimmel
Todd Streed
Jeff Lenz
Steve Johnson
Richard Steege
John Des Roches
Jay Fisher
Dale Junttila
Nicholas Nelson
Jim Hale

Edward Oliveras
Susamn Huan
Roger Buoen
Brad Boehne
Dan Syverson
Robert Jensen
Bill Bray
Jeffrey Swainhart
Phillip Nesburg
Mike Gustafson
Thomas Schrunk
Roy Schulz
Ronald Kvass
Dan McKnight

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Classified Ads

Advertising in the classifieds is provided to members of the Minnesota Woodworkers Guild free of charge. Ads placed should be for goods or services of general interest to the woodworkers who make up the guild community. Ads for services will run until cancelled. Other ads will run for one issue unless renewed. Submit ads to [Jerry Beutel](mailto:Jerry.Beutel@minnwood.org)

Wood

Unfinished hardwood picture frame molding, in lengths. Liquidating my inventory. Beautiful, various woods: cherry, maple, walnut, ash, poplar, birch. Several profiles including floater moulding. Moulding is unfinished and sold by the stick, average length 8 - 10 feet. See profile examples at:

[https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?](https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1455897894148.42875.1734387448&l=4c7d9cbea4&type=1)

[set=a.1455897894148.42875.1734387448&l=4c7d9cbea4&type=1](https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.1455897894148.42875.1734387448&l=4c7d9cbea4&type=1) Prices vary depending on wood and profile, start at \$1.30/foot. Contact me for more info at: info@sheralynbarnes.com

Shop Space

Dream Workshop Space for rent /to share (several areas to pick from): 2303 Kennedy Street NE. 4500 s.f. total shop space. Industrial building with mushroom pillars. 12' high ceilings and concrete floors. 10 hp Quincy air compressor. Heavy power - 3 phase and single phase. Private build/work space. Heat/electricity included. Loading dock. Easy parking. Spray booth available on second floor. Room for your own tools/machines. Internet available. Southern exposure/natural light. Many possibilities for the serious hobbyist or professional. Affordable. No curfew.

Optional use of Altendorf sliding table saw, 10" Unisaw, Holzher edgebander, edge sander, pocket drill, system drills, pallet rack, drill presses, lathe, panel carts, 36" wide steel storage lockers, etc. Private office/drafting table available. Contact: **Dale 612.812.5331 for viewing.**

North Country Woodshop – Woodshop Open to the Public. The easiest way to describe North Country Woodshop would be this: It's a health club for woodworkers. But, instead of treadmills, we have table saws...instead of dumbbells, we have drill presses, lathes, joiners, sanders, and so on. If it belongs in a woodworking shop, North Country Woodshop has it. And the best

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part, all the tools are available to use with a simple membership to North Country Woodshop.

Have your own hand tools? Bring'em! Don't have your own hand tools? Rent ours. Our staff of veteran woodworkers will show you how to swing that hammer without hurting yourself...or others. If you need lumber for your project, but don't have time to pick it up yourself, give us a call and we will have it waiting for you when you get there. And when your project is done, we can deliver it for you as well.

North Country Woodshop offers a wide variety of classes for all levels of woodworking ability. We offer classes from beginner to advanced with a large variety of projects and techniques. Our classes are taught by our team of expert woodworkers as well as local and world renowned guest instructors. Contact info at [North Country Woodshop](#).

Space available to rent in Bespoke Minneapolis'/St. Paul workshop.

Rental costs include: full use of shop facilities, finishing room, and all utilities and trash. Shop equipment includes Altendorf sliding table saw, Format cnc shaper, Format digital 20" planer, SCM 16" jointer, Laguna cnc lathe, as well as 16" disc sander, belt sander, moulder, router tables, hydraulic veneer 4' x 8' cold press; 5' x 14' veneer bag press, Laguna 16" capacity re-saw bandsaw, Powermatic 14" bandsaw, drill press, dovetail jigs and etc. Please view our website www.bespokeminneapolis.com to see the type of work which is produced in our shop. Total rent is \$925.00 per month.

Magazines

Woodsmith Magazines Issues #109 - #160, missing #131 & #143. Plus a few extras. Mint condition, 51 issues in all. \$40.00 cash. Call Nick at 763-476-1621

Tools

3 hp, left-tilt JET table saw for sale. Great condition! Need to get \$1,000. Dick Cortright (651) 689-0087

Shopsmith Mark V, Model 500, barely used- capabilities: table saw, disc sander, drill press, horizontal boring machine, lathe. Asking \$600 or best offer. Contact Ron Gardner at 763-786-7513 or ron84gard@fastermac.net

Services

Mike Siemsen's School of Woodworking. Woodworking with a hand tool focus. We have a great line up this year including some tool sharpening and tool tuning classes. Our Workbench Class was a huge success and will be offered again in the future. Take a look at my website, improve your sharpening or furniture making skills! Classes are held in my shop on a quiet rural setting 35 miles North of the Twin Cities. The shop is heated and air conditioned for your comfort year around. Reserve your spot now! Visit my [website at](#)

www.schoolofwood.com, e-mail mike@schoolofwood.com or call ~~651-257-9166~~ for more information.

Woodcraft Education Program. Located in Bloomington, we offer the Twin Cities most complete selection of woodworking classes. Our classes cover furniture making, carving, turning, hand and power tools, and finishing. We also offer free demonstrations every month. Close by, small class sizes and the best local and national instructors make it a great place to bring your skills to the next level. Website: [Woodcraft Bloomington Store](#) *Phone: 952-884-3634*

Workbench Plans. Plans now available for Adjustable Height Workbench with a built in Mobile Base. Email Charlie Kocourek at Charlie@Jack-Bench.com or visit my [website www.Jack-Bench.com](http://www.Jack-Bench.com)

Plane soles milled flat, price ranges from \$12 for a block plane to \$40 for a #8. Sides can be milled square to the sole for \$15-\$20. Contact Chuck Pitschka at ~~952-935-0660~~, or by e-mail at cepitschka@yahoo.com

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Woodworking on the Web

This video of a complex wooden toy is guaranteed to bring a smile to your face.

[Check out this youtube video of an all wooden Rube Goldberg machine....](#)

If you know of a woodworking related website that would be of interest to others send the editor an [email](#) for possible inclusion in a future edition of the Northern Woods newsletter.

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President's Notes



We've had a few changes on the Board of Directors, and I thought this would be a good time to send out an update.

Your current board members are:

President - Charlie Kocourek
Vice President - Jerry Beutel
Newsletter Editor - Jerry Beutel
Treasurer - Karl Foord
Monthly Meeting Director - Bob Bridigum
Information Technology - Jeff Hand

Membership - Carole Magnuson
Member Liaison - Daryl Coulthart
NW Show Chairman - Fran Peterson
Fall Seminar/Education - Dick Schultz
Very active Member at Large - Richard Tendick
Very active Member at Large - Mark Laub

At our last meeting the Board honored me by asking if I would stay on as President for another year, and of course I accepted!

Jerry Beutel accepted the Vice President position and is in line to take over as President at the end of 2012. You will notice that Jerry is still doing great work as the Newsletter Editor, but before he takes over as President he would like to transition away from the Newsletter position.

Richard Tendick has done an amazing job with the Northern Woods Exhibition, but he has been doing that job for several years and after the show last spring he decided to pass the torch to Fran Peterson. Richard is still a very active member of the board and he will work with Fran to organize next year's show. Thanks to both Richard for all his good work and to Fran for stepping up!

You may recall that Daryl Coulthart was active on the Board a few years ago. I am very happy to say that he recently agreed to come back as the Member Liaison. As Member Liaison, Daryl will focus on the needs and interests of the Guild membership. Guild members have a wide range of woodworking interests and experience. Daryl will be seeking out members to find out their interest and how that can be integrated in to guild activities and events.

Denny Swartz was the Sponsorship Director for the past few years, and he did a

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great job! Sponsorships for the Northern Woods Exhibition, thank Denny. Cash awards and other prizes at the show, thank Denny. Sanders, and other give-a-ways at the Fall Seminar; yep, that was Denny, too! Unfortunately, Denny decided to focus his time on other things and he resigned from the Board last month. The good news is that he will remain active in the Guild, and we will still see him at the monthly meetings.

Serving on the Board is a very rewarding experience and I wouldn't trade the time I've spent with the Guild for anything!

There are lots of opportunities to get involved. In addition to the board there are volunteers who manage the library, bring beverages to the meetings, participate on committees, and help with other tasks large and small. The truth is that there would be no Woodworkers' Guild without the people who volunteer to help out, and I want to take this opportunity to personally thank each and every person who helps make this such a great organization.

Charlie Kocourek

Northern Woods

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Fall Seminar - Marquetry with Paul Schurch

Once again the Minnesota Woodworkers Guild sponsored an outstanding educational event with the 2011 Fall Seminar. Dick Schultz, board member in charge of the Fall Seminar, recruited marquetry expert Paul Schürch for this year's seminar. Paul has created over 200 marquetry works. Here is Paul's biography from Fine Woodworking:

"Paul Schürch operates a custom-woodworking shop specializing in marquetry in Santa Barbara, Calif. When he was 15, he went to Switzerland, apprenticing to become a church-organ builder. With this knowledge, Schürch went on to learn about boat-building in the United Kingdom and marquetry in Italy, ending up back in California as a furniture maker and teacher. Until 1995, he traveled once a year to northern Italy to work in a small shop doing production marquetry for the furniture trade, working side by side with some of the finest craftsmen in the world. These days, Schürch, a father of three, also finds the time to teach classes at Marc Adams School of Woodworking and The Woodworking Shows."



Paul Schürch portfolio pieces

Paul covered a wide range of topics during this weekend event and he was also very generous with his time in answering attendee questions. He showed many examples of pieces he has created, talked about the history of veneers and marquetry, described the tools used, including sharpening techniques, and talked about repair and finishing techniques. He then demonstrated in great detail the steps involved in creating a marquetry panel depicting a lady slipper, the Minnesota State Flower. The panel was then auctioned off at the end of the seminar. Winning bid - \$160.

Tools

Though the process of creating large marquetry panels involves dozens or even hundreds of individual steps, the number of tools Paul used was actually quite limited. Schürch wore a small tool belt on his waist in which most of his tools were kept. In the tool belt he had cutting tools: a scalpel, a chisel and a veneer saw; a tweezers for

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picking up small pieces of veneer and a pencil. The butt end of his chisel served as a tap hammer.

On the work table was a cutting mat, straight edge, blue painters tape, veneer tape (AKA gum tape) a sponge in water (to wet the tape), a brass bristle brush and glue.

The primary power tools needed are a scroll saw, and a vacuum bag. In addition a cordless drill received occasional use and a propane burner heated sand into which veneer pieces were placed to shade the edges. A complete set of the tools recommended by Paul can be seen at his [website](#).

Design process

Schürch stated that he often spends more time drawing the pattern that he plans to create than he does making it. Once finalized he draws a "cartoon," an outline of the pattern with the various different pieces marked by a number indicating the species of veneer to be used for that piece. He also makes decisions about which pieces are to have their edges sand shaded to create depth and shadows.

Attendees also learned a great deal about the thinking that Paul puts into his marquetry designs, such as selection of the background color, grain matching of various components, and the correct grain direction of the individual veneer pieces.

Creating the packet

Once the design is established it is time to start making individual pieces and assembling them into the background. This involves many many steps of cutting, taping, stacking, flattening, cutting (again) and separating, shading, taping, flattening, removing tape and so on and so forth. A packet describes a multiple layer pile of veneers stacked in the location in which they will be used (i.e. the veneer for the stem of a flower in the middle of the design, the petals near the top, etc.). Though it is fairly time consuming to create this packet, once created it can be flattened and taken to the scroll saw for rapid cutting of all of the necessary pieces.



Cutting the packet



Assembling the parts of the flower into the background

Assembly

Once the pieces were all cut out it was time to assemble the flower, holding everything together with tape at this time. Eventually this thin assembly is glued to a thick backing which must also be veneered on the reverse side to prevent warping. Finishing steps include repairing any defects, sanding (without sanding through!) and applying a finish.

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What's On Your Bench? - Woodburning

Story by Richard Tendick

Photos by Richard Tendick

Wood burning is an art form in which pictures are created on wood with delicate shading and intricate outlining. While this is a beautiful technique, wood burning can also be used to create a texturizing effect on a wood surface. This effect is created with a hot wire and a souped up transformer to power the hot wire. The red hot wire is gently pushed into the wood surface, accompanied by a flash of flame, and the shape of the wire is deeply burned into the surface of the wood.

I became interested in this technique when I took a class from Molly Winton, a wood turner and wood burner with a national reputation. In this class, she showed us how to take nichrome wire, similar to what is used in toasters, and twist it into interesting shapes.



Nichrome wire formed to burn different designs



Battery charger used to power the wires

The wire is then inserted into a home made pen and attached to a transformer. Since a common wood burning transformer (i.e., inexpensive) cannot handle the current required to we were told that a battery charger for a car could be converted to a high powered wood burning transformer. There are sites on the internet that purport to tell you how to modify the charger to make a wood burning transformer. I looked up these sites and discovered that while the way they modified a charger will work, it is not the correct, or safe, way to modify the transformer. Because it is a lengthy procedure to do this, I hope to have a demonstration for a future Guild monthly meeting where I will demonstrate on an actual charger exactly how to safely modify the battery charger.

The pen into which the nichrome wire is inserted can also be made from common and inexpensive materials. Again, this is something that would take too much time to explain here, but will be covered in the meeting.

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As the photos show, the wire is heated red hot and then pressed into the wood. A flash of flame indicates the wire is burning down into the wood to create the texture you want. The pattern created by repeating the branding process can be left as is prior to finishing, or hidden under a dye to leave only the imprint of the branding wire showing through the dye



Burning tool glowing red and ready to use



Burning the wood

I have been using the technique to create Christmas presents and find that the finished projects such as those pictured below are greatly enhanced by the burning process.



As with any work done in your shop, safety precautions are required. Among other precautions, with woodburning it is necessary to avoid starting a fire and make sure nothing is left smoldering. The use of a charger to create a current should not be done unless you understand the safety requirements.

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