



BENCH TALK

The Monthly Newsletter of the Northeastern Wisconsin Woodworkers Guild

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Visit us on the web at www.newwg.org

July 16 Program Making Money: The Business End of Woodworking

For many Guild members, selling things you make from wood means paying for a new tool or amassing even more wood. For other Guild members, it means making a living from what they love doing. Even if you only sell occasionally, after meeting the pleadings from spouse, children, and grandchildren for this or that wooden treasure, it is important to know about the business end of woodworking. After all, only a few of us are business people first and woodworkers second. We are usually artisans first and business people second; we'd rather be creating than accounting or working out a business plan.

Dr. Jim Holly will be with us July 16 to help frame and answer some of the important questions about the business end of woodworking. Jim is retired from the UW-Green Bay faculty where he headed the University's Small Business Development Center and taught in the business and organizational science programs. Jim has been a small business owner, has conducted training sessions for small business owners all across the United States, and has authored articles and monographs about some of the perils facing small businesses.

Jim plans to start with some basics about understanding your product and your potential customers, creating a workable business plan, pricing, and getting started with things like permits. He'll then talk about questions specific to us as artisans. So, if you have some specific question you would like answered, e-mail it to Dan Alesch (dalesch@new.rr.com) before the meeting or simply call Dan and if he isn't there leave a phone message. You don't even have to identify yourself if you are a little shy (920-468-0132).

This will be a member participation meeting: we hope for lots of questions from the floor and, for those of you who have found answers to tough questions, we hope you will share them with fellow Guilders. We'll see you in MAC Hall at 7 p.m. on July 16.

ELECTION RESULTS

The elections at the annual meeting in June were just as exciting as usual. The following people were elected to office and selected as Committee chairs.

Rich Ward, President
Lyle Martens, Vice President - Programs
Steve Carroll, Vice President, Public Information
Bob Fruzen, Librarian
Steve Lockhart, Treasurer

Terry Keegan, Secretary
 Dan Alesch, Editor
 Fred Juengst, Membership Committee Chair
 Jane Alesch, Chair, Spring Show
 Mark Brienens, Web Master
 Tom Charlier, Special Activities Chair

Many thanks to Tom Tengowski and Floyd Bucher for two years service on the Board.

GUILD PICNIC AUGUST 8

The umpteenth annual Guild Picnic will be held at DeBroux Park in Bellevue on Sunday, August 8 – the same place as the last few years. Things get rolling about noon. A few of us get there earlier to get the fire going and to start cooking corn and stuff. This is a family event. Bring your spouse, kids, grandchildren, or significant other.

The Guild provides roast corn, brats, burgers, and hot dogs, condiments, soft drinks, plates, and plastic ware. Everyone brings a dish to pass, conversation, and a big appetite. Bring your own serving utensils.

The Guild usually buys tomatoes, onions, and pickles. If anyone has an overflowing garden and would like to make one or more of these their “dish to pass,” please call Jane at 468-0132 so she doesn’t spend money on them.

A sign-up sheet went around the June meeting, but not everyone in the Guild was there. If you have not signed up and would like to come, let Jane know who you are and how many are coming. Call her (920-468-0132) to tell her. If she isn’t there, please leave a message or e-mail (jalesch@new.rr.com.) Knowing how many will be there will keep us from running out of food and drink. Right now, we’re at 37 yesses and 24 maybes. If you’re a maybe, please let us know whether you’ll be there. Looks like we’ll have a good turnout, so be sure to be there. Bring along a project or some photos for show and tell.

SAD NEWS

Guild member Kurt Piette sent word that longtime Guild member Elbert Mitchell lost his battle with cancer on June 23. Our thoughts go out to his family. He was a regular at the meetings and a very nice person.

JUNE MEETING REVIEW

by Steve Carroll

There are fewer than ten active Shakers left in this country, and small wonder – their insistence on absolute personal purity meant that they couldn’t make babies to perpetuate the sect. Rather, in order to survive as a group, they had to recruit new converts who could accept that an ascetic and celibate life was essential on the route to spiritual fulfillment. Tough sell today, but founder Ann Lee and eight followers pioneered a movement that prospered and expanded to 23 communities populated by 4,000 - 6,000 individuals by the 1840’s.

At the June Guild meeting, new Guild member and professional furniture maker Brent Berglund explained how the Shaker’s religious quest for spiritual purity left a legacy of elegantly simple and practical wood furnishings that remain popular and are still being replicated more than 150 years later.

While they were extremely conservative socially and insisted that their communities be self-sufficient and independent from the larger society, the Shakers were progressive economically. They utilized the current technology of the day and sold their products to the public for revenue. They were also very creative and inventive, contributing the circular saw blade, flat broom, metal pen nib, seed envelope and many other practical products to the world at large. Shaker furniture was carefully crafted from local materials such as cherry, maple, pine and poplar, and was created as a community rather than as individuals – they eschewed makers’ marks and similar

personal identification. The furniture tended to be specific in purpose, well constructed, and designed for practicality and minimal cleaning and maintenance. It is elegantly functional rather than gimmicky or stylized.

To illustrate traditional furniture design and construction principles, Brent brought one of his rocking chairs to the meeting. He described in detail the design and development process he went through to take the chair from a concept to a practical and reproducible product for his business. This involved selecting desirable features from Shaker and Lincoln rockers as well as influence from traditional Kentucky chair maker Brian Boggs' work and integrating them into an attractive, comfortable and reproducible chair. The final design is elegant in execution and deceptively simple looking, but very challenging to build consistently. The chair contains seven steam-bent components. More than 20 jigs and fixtures are used in construction, not only to fashion the bent pieces, but also to accurately position the components for various mortising, drilling, turning and assembly operations. Brent explained some of the key production steps using photos and black-board drawings for illustration.

For obvious reasons, Brent prefers "bendable" wood for his chairs and listed hickory, red and white oak, maple and white ash as good candidates. He likes to use figured maple such as bird's-eye in the back slats, which can add a degree of difficulty to the bending process. He uses hide glue in assembly as it makes the chairs easily repairable and is well suited to chair joinery. Brent's chairs are woven with fabric strips in the Shaker tradition. This fabric is the most expensive material he uses, and it can take seven to 10 hours to weave one chair.

See the finished product (and the rest of Brent's product line) on his web site bpberglund.com. I guarantee that you will be impressed with everything you find there.

(Editor's note: Jane said it was the most comfortable chair she ever sat in.)

MEMBERSHIP STATUS REPORT

By Fred Juengst

To pay your dues, send your check to Fred Juengst, 846 Cornelius Dr., Green Bay, WI 54311. If you have any questions about your membership, please call me at 920-469-1919 or send me an e-mail at this address: mdjuengst@aol.com.

Eight memberships are up for renewal in July. Your mailing label is highlighted in PINK. Please send in your dues or bring payment to the July meeting and save postage.

Fifteen membership renewals due in June are now one month overdue. Rather than list all these names, please take a look at your mailing label to see your dues renewal date. Please pay your dues today and continue to be an active member of the Guild.

Eight membership renewals due in May are now two months overdue. They are Floyd Bucher, Janet Champion, Jamie Geiken, Ronn Liebergen, Duane Luneau, Joe Morin, Jan Olgren, and Steven Raasch, this is your next to last **Bench Talk**. Please consider continuing being an active member of the Guild and pay your dues today.

Members failing to renew their membership and are overdue by at least three months received a postcard attached to their **Bench Talk**. This is your last **Bench Talk** unless you pay your dues promptly. If you don't wish to continue your membership, please print your name on the card as shown and drop the postcard in the mail. The postcard simply confirms your intent. Please keep your name tag in the event you rejoin later.

To continue your membership, slip the post card and dues payment in an envelope and mail it to me at 846 Cornelius Dr., Green Bay, WI, 54311. Provided you do not mark the postcard in anyway, we will be able to reuse the postcard.

SCROLL SAW NEWS

Remember the 2004 Midwest Scroll Saw Picnic, *Saturday, August 7th* in Richland Center, Wisconsin. There is a dinner Friday evening, August 6th. For more information contact Floyd or Carol Hacker at Ocooch Hardwoods in Richland Center 608-647-2591 or floyd@ocoochhardwoods.com. The scroll saw picnic will be held at the Richland Center middle school. It is on Highway 80, south of the intersection with Highway 14 and north of OO and Ocooch Hardwoods.

Joe Martin would like to car pool to the scroll saw picnic. These days, that makes a lot of sense. You can reach Joe at 920-864-7429.

THE OLD CARVER'S CORNER

Current plans are for the carvers to meet July 20 and August 11, 18, and 25.

The carvers meet at 7 P.M. and continue until they all drift away. Bring a project, some sharp tools, and interesting conversation. If you are not a "regular," call Dan or Jane at 920-468-0132 so they have time to set a chair for you.

THE JUNE BOARD MEETING

The June Board meeting kind of fell apart beforehand. Turns out that lots of Board members had to be out of town on the scheduled day. The next Board meeting will be held sometime in July at Steve Lockhart's home in the Town of Menasha. Members are welcome. Call Steve for directions at 920-733-2347.

CHIPS

by Dan Alesch

☞ Mary Rowland at Woodcraft in Appleton writes to tell me that they are doing some things that may be of interest to you. First, they have a new program called Saturday Morning Seminars. They are free and offer information about specific topics. The next one is July 31 from 8:30 to 10:00 A.M. and

focuses on an Introduction to Spray Finishing. The one after that is August 7 from 8:30 to 10 and is called "Jeff's Jigs." The jigs are for use throughout the shop.

They have Don Washow, an expert woodworker, offering a series of skill development classes. The first one is free: "The Unavoidable Path to Good Woodworking."

To register for those events, call the store at 920-730-9663 or (toll free) 888-399-9663. Finally, Mary says they are holding an all-store 10% off Sale Thursday, July 22.

☞ The irrepressible Curt Andersen submits the following:

"I got a call from a man who wants to get an old mirror re-silvered. Are there any of these folks around? Can you send me a name and number?" Reach Curt at 920-434-1288 during reasonable hours. (If he asks you whether you are the lady with the chickens, don't hang up. It's just his way.)

☞ Also from Curt. He has a **three-phase** 220V Blum combination hinge drilling/insertion tool. It will drill **only** the pattern for Blum 32 mm cup hinges – no other brands. The tool can be modified to drill shelf pin holes; "it's a fairly easy twist-off and twist-on deal." The machine cost \$3500 new. It is in like-new condition. It's three-phase, but can work in a shop with a phase converter. Curt's asking \$1100.

☞ The Old Time Music and Craft Festival in Shawano will be held August 14-15 from 10 to 4 each day. Crafters (like wood workers) are welcome and encouraged to display and sell. For more information, call Dick Karst at 715-526-9856. Dick is a carver and a good guy. He'll give you the straight scoop. Or call Joyous Bowen, crafter chairperson, directly at 715-526-6088.

✍️ *Here's one worth repeating from the last **Benchtalk**.* Gas prices are higher than ever and more and more of our members are having problems driving to Guild meetings at night, especially if they come a long distance. It's a good idea to car pool. Can you bring someone to a Guild meeting with you? We sure don't want to lose those talented folks who are thinking of staying away because it is difficult for them to get to the meetings.

✍️ *Here's another worth repeating.* Mark your calendar. The Guild's Holiday Party is scheduled for December 11 at Dan and Jane Alesch's house.

THIS IS YOUR LAST BENCHTALK UNTIL SEPTEMBER!
REMEMBER THE AUGUST PICNIC.

Since you obviously have a computer, if you want to know how to get to DeBroux Park, go to Mapquest. Find Green Bay. Focus in on the southeast quarter of the urban area, east of I-43. Enlarge and find the park. A map is included in the mailed version. Thanks.

IF YOU WOULD RATHER RECEIVE ONLY THE ELECTRONIC VERSION OF **Benchtalk** AND NOT A MAILED COPY, PLEASE SEND ME AN E-MAIL TO THAT EFFECT. Dalesch@new.rr.com. IT WILL SAVE THE GUILD SOME MONEY. MANY THANKS.