The President's Message

Thoughts About What It Is That Keeps Us Safe

Last Fall, readers of the Old Saw were dealt a dose of reality by a pair of articles, which described serious hand injuries received by two members of the Guild within the past year. As president of the Guild, I wish to thank the authors and the editor for taking the time, and for having the courage, to convey the stories of these events, which were very clearly personal, to the rest of us.

I am sure that it was not fun for them to write it down, or in the process, to relive the experience. For us, it was not fun to read, yet we all learned from it. After reading those two stories, I took time to ponder how it was, that although scarred here and there, I still had all my fingers, and I thought about what it is that keeps us safe.

Thinking Safety

During my years as a teacher of industrial arts, I had to look out for the safety of teenagers in the shop; usually eight at a time. Most of them had no prior experience with power tools. I told them, "A machine is like a snake, if it thinks you are afraid of it, it will bite you!" This is another way of saying, "If you think an accident is about to happen, it probably is."

I also told them that they should have a great deal of respect for a machine, but that if a machine really scared them, they should not go anywhere near it, and it is to this philosophy that I attribute my good safety record in woodshop classes. In other words, I think that some fear is necessary in order to force us to be careful, but we should not let it get the better of us.

Table Saw Zen

My personal view is that safety is a state of mind. We have all learned the technical safety rules about guards and protective gear, but, do we follow them? No safety rule is any good if we don't follow it. So we have our own safety rules, and that is O.K. too, as long as we stick to them.

In my experience, most accidents do not happen during the actual cutting of wood. During these times we are on our guard, watching the blade and the wood, and we usually know where our fingers are.

Accidents frequently occur after the cutting is completed; reaching for a scrap of wood, brushing sawdust off the table, or moving wood and measuring tools around the saw. At these times we tend to forget the danger and drop our guard.

Are accidents the result of distraction, or just the need to watch too many things at once?

In one word, I think that the way to avoid accidents is Concentration.

In a Zen manner, concentration involves eliminating from your mind those thoughts which interfere with your ability to Focus on what is important - Keeping your fingers out of the path of the blade.

When the saw is running, it is no time to be planning the next step, counting pieces, or rushing for any reason what so ever.

The Role Of Experience

Being able to predict what will happen when blade and wood are brought together is the result of experience. There's no substitute for experience, but having said that, it is obvious that no amount of experience will automatically keep you safe. It's too easy to be lulled by routine into a false sense of confidence.

And so my fellow woodworker, each time you walk up to the table saw (or any machine) clear your mind of distracting thoughts, have just the right amount of fear, and remember your fingers are more important than wood.

Have a Safe and Happy New Year!

Jon Siegel
Be Sure To Attend

Guild Scraper Day At Pinkerton Academy
Saturday, January 14, 1994

By John Skewes

The Guild will meet at the Pinkerton Academy woodshop in Derry, NH on January 14, 1994. Our thanks to Jack Grube, Guild member and Pinkerton Academy woodshop instructor for hosting us.

There will be a Steering Committee Meeting at 9:30 AM followed by a general membership meeting at 11:00 AM, the usual hour for a bring your own lunch and a presentation on “Scraper Techniques” at 1:00 PM.

This will be a multi-presenter demonstration on the uses and maintenance of hand scrapers and scraper planes. Scrapers, whether made, bought, or found in a barn, can be either the finest or the most perplexing tool in the shop. All woodworkers have at least one scraper, and some a half a dozen or more.

Sooner or later, we make our peace with the scraper and become the master of at least one. It becomes an everyday, every hour tool, and the one tool that can handle any figured wood or the smooth the transition at a joint.

The four members making the presentations will cover the use of the most common hand scrapers and scraper planes. The presentations include:

David Lamb will cover the making and use of profile scrapers.

John McCauley will come down from his home in Maine to show how he gets the most out of his Stanley #80 scraper plane (the kind that looks like a big spoke shave) and his Swedish hand scraper.

Terry Moore will share his knowledge of sharpening and using a Swedish scraper.

John Skewes will be on hand to show how his Stanley #12 scraper plane (the kind with the rosewood handle) has replaced the belt sander in his shop.

Also playing:

The Scraper Clinic; Q&A and surprises from the peanut gallery. Bring your problem scrapers and your questions, we will try to help the best we can. Also, please bring along your mastery of scraper. This is, after all, a scraper free for all and we want to hear about your tricks and troubles with the scraper.

Scraper Day at Pinkerton is bound to be a “You should have been there!” meeting, so don’t miss it. And bring those scrapers, if you can’t use them, you can sell them to me.

Directions to Pinkerton Academy

From Concord:
Route 93 South to Exit 4. Then as below.

From Massachusetts:
Route 93 North to Exit 4. Then as below.

From Monadnock Region
Route 101 East, Route 93 South to Exit 4. Then as below.

From Seacoast Region
Route 101 West, Route 93 South to Exit 4. Then as below.

Common Directions:
Route 102 East through downtown Derry, by golf course on right to rotary Traffic Circle at By-Pass 28.
Go 3/4 way around rotary, North on By-Pass 28.
Pinkerton St. is first left.
Enter beyond low brick building, park in back.
Plan To Be A Part Of Wood Day At Canterbury Shaker Village, May 6, 1995

Do we deserve a party? YES!!!

Are we gonna party? YES!!!

Wood Day, the annual woodworkers, and now instrument makers and musicians, party at Canterbury Shaker Village promises to be the best yet — more demonstrations, more music, more great food, and more friends, both old and new.

For four years, woodworkers have been sharing and showing off their skills at Canterbury Shaker Village on the Saturday before Mother's Day. The fifth such celebration, on May 6, 1995, will have a true party atmosphere. Musical instrument making will be the featured craft. Since instrument makers can’t resist demonstrating their products, the result will be an unequaled jam session. A general invitation is out to musicians to join the party (wooden instruments required), so all of us, from woodturners to boat builders to joiners and barrel makers, should be demonstrating to music.

Whatever your interest in woodworking, you’ll find masters of the craft demonstrating a wide variety of techniques on May 6th. A lively group of wood turners, the featured craft last year, strive to out do each other on bowl and spindle turning. Try your hand (and foot) on the treadle lathe.

Renowned guitar makers, Terry Moore and Jay Towne, will return this year to inform and delight your ears. There will be an open stage with Tom Pirozzoli. Uillean pipe maker, Bill Thomas makes his debut, as well as the chairmaker’s chairmaker Eric Ginette.

We’re wondering what kinds of water craft the boat builders will bring this year, and what sort of barrel Ron Raiselis will do. Restoration carpentry, a forte of Canterbury Shaker Village, has always been well represented. Oval box making, poplar ware and brown ash basket making demonstrations are standards, too.

For those who love old tools, some of the area’s best antique tool dealers will display and sell their tools.

The history of Wood Day coincides with the history of the Guild of New Hampshire Woodworkers. The day would not be possible without the participation of many of it’s members, both as demonstrators and as support personnel. The Guild’s first juried show opened on the first Wood Day at Shaker Village. It spawned the Carpenter Shop Gallery, which sells fine furniture and wooden accessories, many of these made by Guild members. The annual Gallery Grand Opening now occurs on Wood Day.

No description of Wood Day (or of Canterbury Shaker Village) would be complete without mention of the food! Our famous Chef - Jeff Paige continues to out do himself, and on Wood Day we have a chicken barbecue unequaled anywhere. Come hungry.

All year round, Canterbury Shaker Village provides woodworking classes, daily demonstrations, and sales of individually crafted furniture and small wares by some of the area’s finest crafts people. Wood Day is your annual woodworking connection. Don’t miss it.

1994 Carpenter Shop Gallery Sales Report

by Dave Emerson

The Gallery had many visitors, and significantly more customers than last year. While the number of sales exceeds last year’s, the dollar amount per sale is down, and they did not spend as much per item.

83% of our sales were in the $50 to $150 range. We had 9 sales of $150 to $200. Above that, we sold one coffee table at $225, two end tables at $275, two David Behm chairs and a large carving at $325 and $375. Scott’s maple wall clock sold at $580 - Thank you for your patience, Scott. And last but not least, Al Green’s desk sold for $1325.

Gallery sales are following the “general trend” as near as I can figure it. We had about one third more sales than the previous year, but the total dollar volume was down about 15%. We are getting a lot of exposure, and hopefully, people will remember us when they start digging deeper into their pockets, again.

I am constantly pointing out to visitors that the Carpenter Shop Gallery features the work of Guild of NH Woodworkers members. We are providing an otherwise unavailable opportunity for Canterbury Shaker Village visitors to see true craftsmanship. This exposure has resulted in a number of referrals and perhaps close to the same amount of sales as the shop.

Do you have something to consign to the Carpenter Shop Gallery in 1995? Give me a call and let’s talk about what would sell best.

Editor’s Note: Dave Emerson can be reached at 603-783-4403 ever. Or leave a message at 603-783-9511 days.

Motto Of A Successful Craftsman

Do what you said you were going to do.

Do what you said you would do, when you said you would do it.

Do what you said you would do, for the price you said you would do it for.

Editor’s Note: This motto was one of the bits of wisdom from the last meeting on the Business of Woodworking.
Searching for the Meaning of Life

By Lou Yelgin

I find it curious that whenever I’m at a New England professionals-type party or meet someone from the area, the first question I’m asked after the initial exchange of pleasantries is, “So, what do you do?” I’m sure it’s meant well and is most probably a remnant of the traditional Yankee work ethic, but it bugs me to be defined by the work I do.

This peculiar phenomenon starting me thinking about how people would react if I responded that I wasn’t working at a traditional job. What if I was a woodworker working out of a barn behind my home? Would they really care? Would they quickly end the conversation and walk away from me, or would they want to know more? Does it make a difference what you do, as long as it is legal and you enjoy doing it?

As I face the daily risks of being laid off from my high tech product management job, I am consciously spending time each day on work life introspection. I’ve come to some conclusions. My intellectual and spiritual needs have been sorely neglected for the last five years. The things that really excite me are working with ideas and working with my hands.

I know that many of the professional woodworkers in the Guild have struggled with their work life choices and have made sacrifices in order to pursue their craft. So, I want to include some passages that I read on the Internet for your consideration. They were written by Steven Roberts, a free spirit who has managed to combine his love for biking and boating with computers.

“When the past is rich with landmarks and change, your memory interprets it as long and eventful.

When it’s featureless and filled with numbing routine, you will remember it as a time that has flown by so fast that it frightens you.

Have you ever experienced the phenomenon of meeting an old friend and after a few moments you are both aghast that so many years have passed?

My advice is to fill your life with change, growth, romance, adventure, insane risk, travel, learning curves, new toys and discovery on all levels. This is the key to life extension. The same number of calendar years may pass, but you will look back on them with deep satisfaction rather than the regret of having missed it.”

Recent Additions To The Guild Video Library
2. “1994 Guild Annual Juried Exhibit” at the Hanover League Shop and narrated by Terry Moore.
3. “Gluing Large Columns” by Jon Siegel

Guild Has New Professional Video Camera

By Peter Bloch

After a lot of research and deliberation with the steering committee, the guild has made a major investment in the videotaping project; we have purchased a new video camcorder. This replaces my own camera, which has finally worn itself out. Thanks go to Terry and Ethel Moore for lending us their camera for use in taping the last two demos.

The new camera is a Canon A1 Digital. The most important feature of this camera is that it records in the so-called “Hi8” Format. With the Hi8 format the resolution of the master tapes is twice as good as the regular 8 mm format that we have been using (410,000 pixels per frame versus 220,000). With the higher resolution, the copies will be better quality and we can now edit our tapes without significant degradation of the image.

There are many consumer type Hi8 cameras available, competing with each other mainly on the basis of how small and lightweight they are, and the type of view finder. For the Guild’s purposes, these features are not requirements, since we record from a tripod using a separate monitor. But, there are many other features that are useful to us, and which aren’t common on a consumer type camera.

The Canon is actually a video production camera of the type used by professional videographers. Some of its professional features are that it is designed for tripod mounted operation with the control button wiring ports very accessible. The 10X zoom lens operates very smoothly, and can be augmented electronically for 20X zoom, providing for incredible closeups. Other digital effects include: titling; fade in/out; overlap editing; rock steady freeze frame; “art frame” which gives a painted look to the image, auto-tracking focus; and high gain control for very dark locations.

The audio recording features are highlighted by stereo inputs, which allow two microphones to be used simultaneously. Separate audio input controls and meters for the two tracks allow for mixing the sound properly. Copying and editing tapes is made easier by time code on the tape, and the camera has an infrared remote control unit. S-video output is built in, as is Control-L editing capability.

I know that this description has progressed from the understandable to the esoteric, but I wanted you all to know what the Guild has gotten for it’s money.

This camera is brand new, with Canon USA warranty. It carries a full retail price tag of $2600, but I was able to obtain it for $1010. Half of that money came from American Woodworker magazine in payment for the recent article.

If you want to look it over more closely, I’ll be available during the lunch break at the January 14th meeting.

Editor’s Note: For more information on the Guild Video Library contact Peter Bloch, 603-526-6152.
Morning
By Fergus McMurtrie
Les walked across the gravel of the driveway, despite the thick rain that pelted the flannel of his shirt. Approaching the shop door, he paused momentarily under the sanctuary of the eaves to pull heavy hands from the warmth of his pockets, then fumbled with the knob. The door opened with a groan, as it did every morning, and he stepped inside.

The sun, hidden behind the veil of clouds, did little to illuminate the interior. Les was greeted by a strange assortment of shadows, outlines that he recognized as the tools of his trade, and he stretched for the light switch on the wall. He stood patiently as the fluorescents flickered to attention, and in the clarity of the morning, Les thought that he could detect the bulbs cycling sixty times per second. By virtue of their numbers, the lights transformed the room with their pseudo daylight, an effect that was not entirely welcome considering the earliness of the morning.

Les allowed his eyes to scan the shop, part of a daily ritual to reacclimate to the task at hand. A thin veneer of sawdust blanketed the room, broken only by the footprints entering from the door, and small craters where beads of water had rolled off Les’ clothes. Against the far wall, a small pile of maple offcuts was leaning against a babbitted jointer, a few taller pieces had fallen over and lay strewn on the floor.

The source of the offcuts, a Shaker sideboard, stood nearly complete in the assembly area, it’s two missing drawers suggesting a toothless grin. A well oiled workbench, positioned in front of the shop’s largest window, was covered with drawer parts and the paraphernalia of dovetailing. Under the bench, various chips and shavings lay scattered on the floor.

Before beginning with the business of dovetailing, Les stopped to turn on a dusty radio. Although he could not hear it over the din of the machines, he relished it’s company during the quieter operations. He crossed to the workbench, swept some debris under it with the side of his foot, and picked up a chisel. Turning it over in his palm, Les admired it’s heft, and the way that it fit his callused hand. Wisely, he had sharpened the chisels before leaving the shop on the previous day, and a bare patch of skin on the back of his wrist lay testament to the keenness of their edges.

Gathering his concentration, Les offered the chisel to the half finished drawer side which lay at the ready. He fit the edge into the scribed line, and with a slicing motion pared off a satisfying curl of end grain.

Straining up momentarily from his position over the bench, Les surveyed the shop for the silent approval that accompanies a task well done. Of course there was nothing tangible, yet he could sense it’s presence throughout the shop and was himself satisfied. When he returned to the drawer side, it was with the knowledge that his work rhythm would come quickly, and that he would not break again till lunch.

Outside, the wind driven rain continued its assault on the tiny building, but had no effect on it’s occupant. Inside, it would be a good day.

Editor’s Note: Several Guild members have taken writing courses but are still not confident enough of their skill to submit an article under their own name. This article is from one of those writers and conveys a clear sense of what it is like in a one man shop. Please let me know if you would like to have more pieces like this.

Guild Members In Print
Three Great Articles - Eight Great Authors
Former Guild President John Skewes was the featured craftsman in a three page spread “Woodwork by a master craftsman” in the Home Improvement Guide supplement to the October 15 & 18, 1994 Rockingham County Newspapers. The first page featured a 1/4 page color photo of John at work in his shop and the lead in to the balance of the article on pages 12 and 13 which included four more black and white photographs of his work.

Well done, John and a great credit to you and your work.

The cover of the 1994 issue of American Woodworker headlines “DESIGN SECRETS - Professionals Share Their Strategies” with a photo of David Lamb in his shop. The seven page, all in color, article, “What Is Good Design”, is based on our January 1994 Design Meeting, and on the six members of our panel, John McAlevey, Paul Tuller, Terry Moore, Lee Schuette, David Lamb and Jere Osgood. Each craftsman is featured on his own page, which includes a picture of him in his shop along with his statement on design and two pictures of his work.

This article is one of the best that I have ever seen, with a beautiful layout, excellent commentary, and gorgeous color photos. Fantastic publicity for the Guild, and for each of the featured craftsmen.

Member Garrett Hack of Thetford Center, VT is the author of a four page article in the February 1995, Fine Woodworking magazine. The article, “Breadboard Ends Hold Panels Flat”, covers a subject that would be worth a Guild demonstration meeting and video tape, and Garrett obviously knows his subject. How about it Garrett?

Great job Garrett!

Who is going to be the next member to continue this tradition of great articles on our Guild and our craft?
Green News - Rio Rivuma Importing Sustainable-Yield African Woods

Rio Rivuma, a new, Boston-based, sustainable yield lumber import company is marketing about a dozen new species of wood from Mozambique, and believes that they will soon become as well known as mahogany, purpleheart, and wenge.

So far they have established four retail dealers, including The Woodery in Lunenburg, Mass. and Woodcraft Supply in Woburn, Mass. where they are selling well.

One convert, Steve Kearns

Steve Kearns, owner of Architectural Openings, Inc., a seven person, custom door and window manufacturer in Stoneham, Mass. has committed to using Kiaat for all his work.

Kiaat is a very stable wood with a golden to reddish-brown heartwood and a pale cream sapwood. It is suitable for a wide variety of uses, including furniture, flooring, turning and millwork applications.

Kearns tested several woods for Rio Rivuma and settled on kiaat. He based that decision on several factors: the recommendation of a South African window manufacturing company which uses the wood in its most expensive windows; technical performance ratings from the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in South Africa, a private research firm that Rio Rivuma commissioned to provide data on the woods, and his own tests.

In addition to running the woods through his machinery, Kearns tested kiaat against South American mahogany and Western hemlock. For the tests, he left unfinished blocks of each wood on his shop roof for the winter. By spring, the hemlock was stained and pitted, while the mahogany and kiaat were merely discolored.

Kearns also want to see how the wood would react to extreme moisture levels, so he took glued up blocks, each with three sections, and alternated submerged the blocks in water and placing them on a radiator. That test also lasted through the winter. The hemlock performed the worst, the mahogany moved slightly and the kiaat had almost zero movement.

Regis Miller, tropical woods expert at the US. Forest Products Laboratory, in Madison, Wis. said that he would not call any of these woods lesser-known species. "They’re all very good, commercial grade woods. They may be new to the American market but they are used in other parts of the world.”

The wood will be logged from 1.2 million hectares which Rio Rivuma leases from the Mozambique government. The lease allows Rio Rivuma to harvest lumber, encourage agriculture and manage a nature preserve in an area about the size of Massachusetts.

Rio Rivuma will manage the reserve according to a model developed by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) called the Bio-reserve Concept. Under the concept, an untouched area, that serves as a gene bank for plant and animal life, lies at the center of the reserve. Radiating out from the center, more aggressive uses of the land, such as sustainable-yield logging and agriculture, are permitted.

The Rio Rivuma reserve has 450,000 hectares as its gene bank, with roughly 800,000 available for logging and agriculture. The company divides its 800,000 hectares into 80 areas, to be harvested on an 80 year cycle. It will cut in strips roughly 150 meters long by 25 meters wide. These strips will be separated by a minimum of 200 meters, depending on the terrain, thus leaving a continuous area of forest behind.

Portable sawmills and small, four wheel drive trucks will be used to cut, mill and haul the lumber, thus reducing, or eliminating the need for logging roads. It is a dry land forest with an open canopy, so you can see and drive through it. It is not a rain forest.

Depending on abundance of any one species, a limited amount will be harvested each month. Kiaat is available at 1,200 cubic meters a month. Woods like ebony and pink ivory wood will not be harvested at all.

After the lumber harvest is finished, the native people are encouraged to move in and farm the area for seven years and to tend the seedlings planted to replace the trees cut down. The people have a nomadic lifestyle already. They go into an area of the forest, burn a little area, farm, and then move on. This concept mimics the way they live already, only instead of burning the forest, they make money from the logging and then farm.

They are encouraged to plant legumes, like beans, for protein and for fixing the nitrogen in the soil. This isn’t a conversion to agricultural use, but a system to recondition the soil and re-establish the original trees. The amount and type of seedlings planted depend on the survival rates of the trees and on the natural regeneration of the trees cut. Some trees like messasssa replant naturally, others like blackwood require more attention.

Rio Rivuma now employees about 200 local people in technical positions and is adding another 120. A co-op of about 100 families will tend the land. Plans call for adding another 200 families by the end of the year, and ultimately plans call for about 10,000 families to be involved.

As the civil war winds down, the population is expected to return. The area now has virtually no one living in it, but the population is expected to grow to about 50,000, a combination of refugees and people returning to their homes after the war.

Editor’s Note: This information is adapted from an article in the December 1994 Woodshop News. For more information contact Jack Grube at Pinkerton Academy or at home from 3 to 8 pm at 603-432-4060.
Woodworker’s Calendar

Guild 1994-95 Schedule of Events
Program Chairman Ted Blachly announces the following events of interest to Guild members. Anyone with suggestions or questions may contact Ted at 603/456-2385.

Saturday, January 14, 1995.
“Guild Scraper Demonstration Meeting” on the use of all types of scrapers. Hosted by Jack Grube in the at Pinkerton Academy Woodshop, Derry, NH, from 9:30 am to 4 pm. Steering Committee meeting from 9:30 to 11:00 am. General business meeting from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm. BYO Lunch 12:00 to 1:00 pm. Scraper demonstration from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. For more information, contact Jack Grube from 2 pm to 8 pm, at 603/432-4060, or John Skewes at 603/778-7360.

February 1-5, 1995
“Master’s Level Craft Studio Conference”, Bennington College, Bennington, VT. Jere Osgood teaches “Lamination Techniques For Furniture Makers.” For more information contact Jere Osgood at 603/654-2960.

February 16 Through April 17, 1995
“Master Works by the League of New Hampshire Craftsmen” exhibit at the Currier Gallery of Art in Manchester, New Hampshire. Call for entry closed November 28, 1995. For more information contact Susan Frentzen at at the League of NH Craftsmen, 205 North Main Street, Concord, NH 03301. Tel. 603-224-1471.

March 11, 1995
All entries for the League of NH Craftsmen’s “20th Annual Juried Exhibit” at the Thorne-Sagendorph Art Gallery must be received by March 11, 1994. Submitted works will be juried March 16, and jury action cards will be mailed by March 18. For more information contact exhibit coordinators Sharon Callahan or Susan Frentzen at the League of NH Craftsmen, 205 North Main Street, Concord, NH 03301. Tel 603-224-1471.

April 8 & 9, 1995
“The 1995 Spring Art & Craft Show” with 160 juried booths is seeking craftsmen. For more information contact Marissa White, Fieldstone Shows, Inc., 6 Deerfield Drive, Medfield, MA 02052. Tel. 508-359-6545.

March 31 Through May 14, 1995
“20th Annual Juried Exhibit by the League of New Hampshire Craftsmen” will be at the Thorne-Sagendorph Art Gallery in Keene, NH. For more information contact Susan Frentzen at the league of NH Craftsmen, 205 North Main Street, Concord, NH 03301. Tel. 603-224-1471.

May 6, 1995
Wood Day at Canterbury Shaker Village. For more information contact Dave Emerson days 603-783-9511 or home 603-783-4403.

Hinckley 42 Foot Sail Boat
Featured Door Prize at Wood Day?? Come and Find Out

Hinckley 42

Designed by McCurdy & Rhodes, Inc.

The newest addition to the fleet is the magnificent McCurdy and Rhodes designed 42. There was only one criterion employed in the design of the Hinckley 42: that regardless of expense, it had to be the best cruising yacht of its size in the world. Even among our most discriminating charter clients, the 42 engenders the comment that it is an unexpected privilege to be able to charter such a yacht. Hinckley 42 is semi-custom built to individual owner’s requirements, outfitted with the finest in sailing gear, safety and navigation equipment. One can expect to cruise swiftly in unabashed luxury aboard the Hinckley 42.
The Guild of New Hampshire Woodworkers
The Old Saw News Letter
178 Derry Road
Chester, NH 03036