Signature Side Chairs
Sharpening Woodturning Chisels

The Old Saw

coloring cherry • tool review • overseas competition
classic tops • overlooked tools • rubbing finishes • tips & techniques

Calendar

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Photo by Marty Milkovitz

for a european customer – page 10

American Style Hutch
What if Disaster Strikes?

The rain won't seem to let up! October has started off as one of the rainiest months in memory, and localized flooding in New Hampshire is taking its toll on many families and communities. In recent months we have seen nature unleash its fury with hurricanes in the south and earthquakes in the middle-east, and now we see that even here in NH we are subject to nature's wrath. We're pretty used to the harshness of winter – in fact that is when many of us who are not full time woodworkers head to the workshop.

The recent events got me to thinking about what it would mean to my shop if a disaster struck. Once the family was secure, and other critical needs were met, what would I find when I returned to the shop? If a fire occurred would I be able to document my losses, those in my shop, as well as my other property? Like many other woodworkers, I've accumulated quite a few tools and materials over the years and replacing them would be a costly and time consuming event. Have you reviewed your insurance to make sure it will provide the coverage that you need to replace your shop contents? Do you have an inventory of your shop and household contents? Taking video and still pictures of all of your rooms is a useful exercise. Open the cabinets and drawers and photograph those contents as well. Make up a simple inventory to record model and serial numbers and acquisition and replacement costs. Then store these photographic and inventory records in another location (safe deposit box, family member, friend). In the event of a disaster, these records can be invaluable in documenting your losses.

We can’t predict natural disasters but we can take steps to prevent others. It seems every few months I read about a fire in a workshop, often caused by someone who left oily rags lying around. Spontaneous combustion is not an uncommon event. A small pile of rags soaked in finishing oils will catch fire! And our workshops generally have plenty of materials to support a fire once it starts. Take extra care in disposing of finishing materials and rags. Keep the proper type of fire extinguisher(s) in your shop.

Keep your shop neat and in order – it’s much easier to spot a problem in a shop that is neat, rather than one that is piled high with debris. And keep a well stocked first aid kit in your shop as well. I’m generally alone when working, and while I’ve never needed more than a band aid from

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The next meeting of the Guild is Saturday November 19th at Pinkerton Academy in Derry. We are fortunate to have as our presenter Janet Collins of Ryegate, Vermont. She is a 1996 graduate of the furniture program at the North Bennett Street School and returns there regularly to teach courses in Decorative Inlay, Flat Edge Tool Sharpening, Spindle Turning, Slip Seat Upholstery and Relief Carving. For several years she has served as the director of the Workshops Program there. Janet is a versatile woodworker and makes furniture in a wide variety of styles, though she most often builds shaker, mission, period, and some contemporary pieces. If you are interested in seeing her portfolio, you can view it at www.jacwoodworking.com.

The topic for the meeting is Sand Shaded Inlay Technique. Janet will show us how to vary the color of the pieces of veneer often inlaid into furniture using a hot sand technique. She will focus on the layout and construction of the quarter fan and oval inlay that is often found in Federal style furniture. The demonstration piece will be a drawer front. If time permits, other inlay techniques will also be addressed.

There will be a social hour from 10:00-11:00 followed by the business meeting from 11:00-12:00. Lunch (bring your own) is from 12:00-1:00. There are a number of local sub shops within a 5 min. drive of Pinkerton Academy. Janet’s presentation will be from 1:00-3:00. Because of the limited seating, members are encouraged to bring their own chairs. The meeting will be in the Low Building wood shop which is accessible from the rear of the building where there is plenty of parking. Access is from Academy Street which runs from the Rt. 28 Bypass to Tsieninto Road. Go to www.pinkertonacademy.net and click on Maps for directions.

President’s Message – continued
the kit, I’m sure glad its close by in the event something unexpected happens.

Do you have a flashlight in the shop, in a spot where you can locate it in the dark? Losing your power while working in your shop late at night can lead to some unexpected bumps and bruises, not to mention the damage to that nearly finished piece as you trip over in the darkness.

I think we often get complacent when it comes to preparing for disasters, and when thinking about our own personal safety. Take a few minutes and think about what preparations you can undertake to make your shop safer and more secure.

And then, enjoy woodworking with a little extra piece of mind.

Small Meetings — The small group meetings which had originally been planned for October 15 have been postponed and will be rescheduled. We were unable to put together a set of small group meetings for October and still have time to communicate this information and provide you time for registering. Due to the small size of the meetings and the fact that they are often held in shops with limited space, extra attention is required to coordinate these meetings in order to ensure that everybody has an opportunity to participate if they so desire.

We are tentatively planning five meetings to be held March 18. These will be spread around the state. We will advise you via The Old Saw (Feb. issue), the web-site and e-mail, what the topics and locations will be.

While on the subject of small group meetings, we are always open to the idea of new topics, and our meeting coordinator would appreciate any suggestions for topics that you think would be appropriate for the small group meeting format. That includes those willing to host a meeting!

Feel free to e-mail me suggestions at strathamwood@comcast.net.

Renew Your Membership Now

The Guild membership year runs from Sept. 1 to Aug. 31. Dues are still $30 for the year. To renew, go the member’s site at members.gnhw.org, verify your information, and print the pre-filled renewal page. Generic membership forms are also available at www.gnhw.org. New membership cards will be mailed out shortly after receiving your application. Renew today before you forget!

This is your LAST ISSUE of “The Old Saw” if you have not renewed – don’t miss out!
**Ask This Old Saw!**

**Q** OLD BARN RAFTERS — I recently bought a couple of old barn rafters, probably maple. They turned out to be full of worm holes which is fine by me as the wood is solid.

My questions – Are there worms there now and if so, how do I kill them? Is the dust harmful? There is a lot of it. I am making a child’s bed with some of it. I would like to fill the holes and assorted cracks, etc. with dyed epoxy, accenting the negative as it were. Since the posts are turned the epoxy will have the chance to run downhill. I would prefer it not to. What do I do to make the epoxy stay in the holes and what do I dye it with? — Dave Frechette

**DJ Delorie replies:** When using epoxy to fill holes and gaps in wood, the best way is to fill the holes before turning or planing. As you fill each hole, cover the hole with tape to contain the epoxy. Plastic packing tape is probably best, as it’s wide, lightweight, and clear. To dye the epoxy, you can mix in any variety of dry pigment dyes (lamp black, powdered food dye, wood dust, ground pencil leads, etc.).

Note that epoxy fumes are hazardous. Please take appropriate precautions.

**Bruce Hamilton replies:** There are many insects that make holes in wood, the termite and carpenter ant being the most notorious. The ones you are referring to are most likely a species of what is commonly known as the powder post beetle. The “dust” they leave behind is called fras and, as far as I know, it’s non-toxic. It is not the beetle that makes the holes but the larva. The larva feed on the wood, develop into a beetle, the beetle flies away to mate, the female lays her eggs in the wood and the cycle starts all over again.

Whether or not you have an active infestation takes a little detective work. You may see fras dust on the floor under the object. Sometime you can actually hear the lava eating! The larva have to have a certain level of moisture to survive. Fortunately for us, our homes are generally too dry in the winter and the larva dehydrate and die. This is the best and least toxic way to get rid of them.

Controlling the epoxy can be done in several ways. You’re going to have to experiment. I’d start by taping over the filled holes and cracks after I filled them. If you chill the epoxy it may stiffen sufficiently to prevent it from running. I think you can use just about any dye stain or pigment to color epoxy but I would do a test sample to verify that it will dry properly. You could also call the manufacturer for info as well.

**Roy Noyes replies:** This is a difficult question to answer fully. The holes that you refer to are undoubtedly Powder Post Beetle holes. The holes are due to the larvae which feed on the sugars in sap wood; the adults do very little damage. I would expect that even if you sealed up all the holes with epoxy, that there will be new holes appearing as the eggs inside the wood hatch and the adult beetles emerge. As far as I know, the dust is not poisonous, however the emerging beetles may attack other wood in your home.

I do not recommend using wood infested with powder post beetles and suggest that the best thing to do is burn it.

**CONTROL & RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The following points should aid in discouraging powder post beetle infestations:

1. The first thing to do is reduce the moisture content, through proper ventilation to less than 20%. Moisture meters can be used to determine the moisture level in the wood. Central heat, vapor barriers and good ventilation can help control moisture. Rough-cut lumber should be kiln-dried to kill all stages of the beetle. Reducing moisture, however, may not be enough to completely control powder post beetle infestations.

2. Uninfested wood that is sanded and varnished will not normally be attacked by the adult beetles because they cannot find crevices in the wood surface into which they would deposit their eggs.

3. Items of value should not be stored in out buildings such as barns and sheds. These buildings are often infested with wood-boring beetles.

4. Infested furniture can be fumigated in a fumigation chamber. Only pest control operators licensed to do fumigations are permitted to purchase and use these materials.

5. Surface sprays containing borates will prevent newly hatched larvae from entering the wood. However, this technique is not effective on wood, which has been varnished, waxed or otherwise sealed from attack by moisture.

6. If practical, remove infested wood. If not, use residual borate insecticides.

*Courtesy of the Do-It-Yourself web site.*

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**TidBits by Roy Noyes**

**REMOVING PAINT SPOTS** — Did you know that citrus based paint remover is ideal for removing paint spots from fabrics, particularly if the paint is not allowed to dry too long? It works on most fabrics, except 100% cotton and will not damage the fabric. It will also remove paint spilled on asphalt shingles and plastic surfaces. Look for CitriStrip or Goof Off in Wal-Mart or your favorite hardware or home improvement store.

It does not work on milk paint, which is best removed with Behlen’s PDE paint remover.
You don’t need many tools.
You don’t need a lot of wood.
You don’t need to spend a lot of time to have a finished product.
And even a beginning woodworker can make a decent top the very first try.

You don’t even need a lathe, although most woodworkers use one to make a top. Remember, tops have been around a long time and were made many years before the first lathe was thought of.

You only have a few rules to follow to make a top that will spin. It should be balanced equally around the axis. And for a long spin, it needs to be heavy enough to maintain momentum. It does not even need to be round, although most tops are. The best spinners are spun on a small, smooth and maybe polished point.

The simplest top you can make is a finger top. Some people turn one on a lathe from one solid piece of wood. These are great to make at a demo or a show as one can be finished in several minutes, decorated with a magic marker and given to some lucky kid who watched the whole thing wonderously.

The kind I prefer are made from a disc of ½˝ baltic birch plywood about 3˝ in diameter with a hole for a small dowel in the center. These can be made without a lathe. You can put a short piece of threaded rod or even a bolt the size of the dowel in a drill press and using a rasp file or chisel and a make-shift tool support, smooth and put a decent shape to the disc. Next, glue a pointed dowel in the hole and add a small round headed nail or brad at the point for a smooth spin. A little wax with help it spin longer.

If you punch a hole in the middle of a cardboard disc the same size as the wooden one, it can be decorated with many colors and will blend together as it spins. Red and blue will look purple, red and yellow will appear to be orange. This is a great way to introduce a young child to how different colors look to our eyes.

For more sophisticated tops, make a self winding or a handled top you hold with one hand while pulling the string with the other.

The surest way to get the hole for the stem of the top and the open space for the string to be aligned is to mark and drill press pieces while they are a square shape and then turn them. Use seasoned hardwood.

The self winding top is of cherry for the most part. The handled top was made using osage orange.

See Enie’s handled top on page 12
Sharpening Woodturning Chisels

A sharp edge, no matter how painstakingly achieved, is only temporary.

In the first article of this series, I explained my plan to present this topic as two subjects – Tool Point Geometry, and Sharpening. In this, the second part, I will now discuss sharpening, which is defined as the routine maintenance of the perfect edge. This operation assumes that the correct geometry has previously been achieved, and we aim to keep it that way as we sharpen the chisel hundreds or even thousands of times.

My Search for a Better Way

I had reached a plateau in 1977. I already had 10 years of turning experience, and I wanted to quit cabinetmaking and millwork to concentrate strictly on turning. The one problem which I had not successfully solved, and which was creating a bottleneck in my work was sharpening. My turning was plagued by an endless cycle of disappointment over how short a time the tool remained sharp, frustration over the interruption of my working rhythm to sharpen tools, and the resulting syndrome of sharpening procrastination. I decided to try to develop a system of sharpening that was so quick, so convenient, and so accurate, that I would no longer suffer from this problem.

I began to realize that sharpening was not something to be made into a ritual at the beginning of the day, or the end of the day, or the start of a project, or any other particular time. Sharpening should be as much as possible a continuous process. But in order to achieve this, I had to find a way to sharpen in seconds instead of minutes. The solution I eventually developed was a belt and buff system that takes seven seconds to sharpen a chisel.

Complete Disclosure

I sell sharpening machines through my company Big Tree Tools, Inc. If I can convince you that a belt and buff sharpening system is the best, then I might get your business, but that is not why I am writing this.

Belt & Buff Systems

The belt and buff system of sharpening was invented (or at least popularized) by Woodcraft Supply in the late 1960s through a tool they called the Mark II sharpening system. On these systems, the belt runs up, that is, away from the edge, which is contrary to the usual practice of running the tool down, a method which was introduced by grinding wheels. Nonetheless there are many turners who use the belt in the down direction on the theory that if you use very light force, the compression of the belt is insignificant. This may work just as well, especially with a coarser grit, and more study needs to be done on this question.

One of the great advantages of a belt system is that the grit can be changed in seconds without altering your jig or set-up in any way. So a belt system can satisfy Sharpening Rule #4 and give you two systems in one.

The difference between the Mark II and a modern woodturner’s belt and buff system is that two critical improvements have been made:

1. Flat grind – The Mark II has a large contact wheel which gives a very slight hollow grind, but it still is not flat. The best sharpening systems use a flat platen and the grind is absolutely flat.

2. Incremental set-up of the vee block – The Mark II has a vee block on a sliding bar, and many types of woodturner’s sharpening jigs (such as Wolverine) still use this old form. The best type of vee block is incremental, meaning that the block has discrete positions.

Rules of Sharpening

1. Remove the least amount of metal possible.

2. Convenience eliminates procrastination.

3. Accuracy (repeatability) prolongs tool life, reduces sharpening time, reduces heat buildup and removes the least amount of metal.

4. You need Two separate sharpening systems:

   a. Coarse grit for roughing out new or damaged chisels to obtain the correct geometry

   b. Fine grit for routine sharpening and edge maintenance.

A woodturner’s belt and buff machine
This allows the jig to be set-up in about two or three seconds, and automatically establishes exactly the same precise position each time. An incremental set-up allows repeatability which is much more accurate than a sliding system, as well as being faster.

What is Sharp? What is Dull?

To understand sharpness, we need to consider the difference between sharp and dull. When a tool is sharp, the two planes or surfaces of the edge (dihedral) meet to form a perfect line. As the tool is used, the edge wears down and becomes dull. This is a gradual but continuous process, and eventually the turner notices that the tool is not cutting as well as it did before.

The symptoms of dullness are:
1. More force is required to keep the tool stable.
2. A rougher surface is produced with more tear-out.
3. More dust and less shavings emerge from the tool.
4. More heat is produced, especially on dry wood.

A close examination of a dull tool reveals that the edge is rounded over. The abrasive wear has rounded the edge of the tool. You can feel it. It’s smooth. And you can see it clearly in strong light. The edge now looks like a bright line because it has a width which it did not have when it was sharp. As a tool dulls, the width of the edge gradually goes from zero (or close to zero) to about 0.005 inches when we notice that it’s not cutting as well as it did when freshly sharpened. Depending on the operation at hand, you may continue to use the chisel until the width of the dull edge reaches about 0.001 inches, at which time you will need to sharpen it. If you are not familiar with these small measurements, I should point out that 0.001 inches is less than half the diameter of a human hair.

This brings us to Sharpening Rule #1 – Remove the minimum amount of metal possible. If you follow the above logic, you will realize that you can restore the edge to perfect sharpness by grinding off 0.001 inches of metal. This means that you can sharpen a chisel 1000 times before 1 inch of blade has been consumed. If you grind off more than this, you are increasing the risk of overheating the tool, wasting expensive chisel, wasting grinding media, creating excessive harmful abrasive dust, and wasting time which unduly interrupts the rhythm of your work.

This leads to Sharpening Rule #2 – Sharpening a chisel involves three steps – set-up, grinding, and deburring. With a good sharpening system, this should take less than 10 seconds total time for all three steps. The elements of the system which allow this are simple: incremental set up, automatic precise repeatability allows you to remove the minimum amount of metal (typically 0.001 inches or less), and a buffing wheel for deburring on the same machine. Your sharpening station should be at most two or three steps away from your lathe. Sometimes I put mine right on the lathe bed if space allows. Then I can sharpen by simply taking one step; and I’m back turning wood in about 7 seconds because of course, I leave the lathe running.

Buffing

Many people buff too much, and over-buffing will round the edge. Two or three seconds should be the maximum time for buffing. It is only necessary to wipe away the burr left by grinding. Usually on a gouge, this means buffing inside the flute, and hardly at all on the bevel side. On a skew chisel, alternating for one second on each side will achieve a perfect edge in a few seconds. A narrow ¼” buffing wheel works best because it will compress into the flute of even the smallest gouge. The best buffing compound is emery because it is designed for ferrous metals.

Continued on Page 8
Grinding a Flat Bevel

In part 1 of this series, I explained that wood turning chisels should not be hollow ground, but flat. Obviously you cannot achieve a flat grind using the periphery of a wheel. There are several ways to achieve a flat grind: My favorite way of course is a belt, but you can also use a sanding disc or a face wheel. However, it is not safe to use the side of a grinding wheel unless the wheel was designed for this purpose – i.e. a face wheel.

Single vs. Multi-Tiered System

Some turners have more than one sharpening routine. That is, sometimes they grind, sometimes they hone, sometimes they stop or buff, etc. Their plan is to restore the edge quickly by honing (with a slip stone, for example). Then, after they have done that a certain number of times, they have to go back and grind. This is what I call a multi-tiered system, and I don't like it. The edge is not consistent, that is, it is not the same after honing as it is after grinding. Also each time the edge becomes dull, you must decide which process is necessary at that time. I prefer a single-tiered system, which means that you do the same routine every time you sharpen, and there are no decisions to make. The edge is consistent and performs exactly the same way every time.

Scrapers

When the scraper is taken right from the grinder, it has a small burr. You can feel it with your fingernail. Your nail will not slide off the edge, but will be caught by the burr. Some turners enhance the burr by burnishing the edge with hard steel. The burnishing process “turns the burr” by forming the metal at the edge into a thin projection. The formation of a burr by this process is very delicate business, and different types of steel chisels react differently to the burnisher. This is because turning a burr depends on the malleability of the metal, which in turn depends on the metallurgy and the heat treatment of the steel in the chisel. The old saw, “If a little is good, then a lot is better,” definitely does not apply to forming a burr on a scraper. Too much burr will make the chisel not cut at all or become unpredictable and “grabby”. Many people tell me that they struggled with scrapers for years until they discovered that they had too much burr.

Grinding methods for scrapers are very straightforward. A platform jig holds the tool at the correct angle against a grinding wheel. A medium fine wheel dressed with a diamond tool will give good results, and the tool may be used directly from the grinder. If you need a more aggressive tool for roughing, burnishing may help; but experiment cautiously. Never buff a scraper.

Gouges

Because gouges are ground on the bevel side only, it is easy to overlook the surface quality of the flute itself. It is necessary for the surface of the flute to be polished to a very smooth condition, because the quality of the edge depends on it. If the flute is rough, you need to polish it with a round edge slip stone. A gouge with a rough surface in the flute can never be sharpened to a fine edge by grinding or honing the bevel alone.

Side Grind Gouges

If you want to create a side grind on your gouge, you need a special jig. Since you cannot use the handle to anchor the rotation of the tool, you must employ a jig which clamps onto the blade in some way and provides a pivot point which is off the axis of the chisel. In order to achieve repeatability, this jig must be attached at precisely the same position each time it is used.

Various side grind jigs are available, or you can make your own. Some of these jigs allow the angle of the leg to be adjusted, while others are fixed, and the angle can only be adjusted within a small degree by clamping the jig to the blade of the chisel in different positions.

Figure 6 shows the geometry of the side grind jig. Notice that the angle of the leg, and the location that the jig is clamped to the chisel combine to form an offset angle. Theoretically, this angle can be anything from 0 – 90 degrees.

I hope that through these articles you have begun to think about sharpening in a new way. Most turners find their enjoyment of the craft is greatly increased when sharpening procrastination has been eliminated.
COLORING CHEERY SAPWOOD — I have made a bed from cherry. Most of it is heart wood but there are a few areas of sapwood and I really do not want the white. Is there a way to stain this to match the heart wood? - Dave Freschette

Both cherry and walnut are woods in common use. Both have contrasting sapwood. Toning in the sapwood is easily done with a water stain. First, it is important to understand the difference between “stains” and “dyes”.

Stains are pigments which are carried in a solvent, and when applied the pigment gets deposited in the pores of the wood. This is not very effective on cherry since the pores are small and the natural color of the wood shows through the stain. So called “water stains” are actually dyes which change the color of the wood itself. They are available as powders in a rainbow of colors and are mixed with water to make the usable dye. The colors are usually classified by the wood they are made for. For coloring cherry sapwood, the best color choice is a J.E. Moser dye called Natural Antique Cherry, which is available from Woodworkers Supply.

Water Stains — Using water stains involves the judicious use of subtlety. The stain container suggests mixing the entire contents in a quart of water. That is powerful enough to turn your work deep dark red.

The effect of water stain is cumulative. That means that two coats will give you twice the amount of color, so you can mix them very weak and gradually approach the tint you are looking for. For coloring sapwood, I would suggest mixing somewhere on the order of 2-5 grams of powder in a quart of water. Use warm water for quick dissolving and then experiment with that on scrap wood.

Step by Step — Remember that water stains will raise the grain of the wood, so have your work thoroughly sanded. Then wet it with water and sand again with 220 grit before you do any dying. Test the stain on scrap from the same wood as your work. It will appear dark when the stain dries on the wood. That is ok, because the true color is only visible with finish applied.

I like to make up test boards from scrap where I can apply one coat over the whole piece, then two coats over part, etc. Then I finish the whole board and judge the effect. The nice thing too, is that if you have mixed the stain too strong, just dilute it with more water until you reach the color you want.

I apply water stain with an artist brush when I need to color in a narrow streak of sapwood. Cherry usually has distinct figure lines delineating the edge of the sapwood and it is easy to paint on the stain following these lines.

If I need to color a large area, or a whole piece, I use a sponge for application because I can do it quickly and mop up any runs or puddles. Don’t let the stain puddle up, or you will get a dark spot. Try to color the entire area before any of it dries because re-applying will double the effect.
This job came about as a result of meeting a couple from Belgium at the Sunapee Craftsmen Fair. They were here in New England on holiday, and by chance happened to come to the fair out of curiosity. The Shaker Linen Press that I wrote about in the April, 2005 issue of *The Old Saw* was actually the inspiration for this piece.

Designing this piece was really quite simple as the couple knew exactly what they wanted. But up until now, they were unable find someone willing to build exactly what they were after. I wondered why they would go through the expense of transport and customs when there should be plenty of craftsmen in Europe that are certainly capable of building such a piece. They explained that no one in Europe builds or understands the “American Style”. At this point I myself wasn’t quite sure what they meant by the “American Style”.

We discussed what they had in mind as they looked through my portfolio. Listening to their comments about some of my pieces, it became obvious that what they were referring to as the “American style” is what we commonly call “Shaker”. I suppose that stands to reason since the “Shaker style” and its close cousin, “Early American”, did evolve here. They provided me with some simple sketches of what the piece was to look like and the space it was to occupy. All I needed to do was to work the proportions so that it looked good and convert metric to standard.

They also explained that although this piece was to be built in the “American Style”, it also had to blend in with their existing furniture. In other words, Shaker but with a European twist. We agreed on a budget and they returned home with a few wood samples to match up to their existing furniture. They in turn sent me the manufactures catalogue of their furniture, highlighting edge and leg profiles and identifying each piece that they owned. This was not your everyday household furniture but the equivalent of what I would consider the “Thomas Moser” of Europe – Scandinavian with a bit of Shaker influence.

**About the piece**

The hard maple sample piece was a dead match to their existing furniture; therefore, this piece is built almost entirely of hard maple. I used poplar for the drawer bottoms and soft maple for the back of the upper case mainly for its color variation to add a bit of visual interest. The finish was specified to be unstained natural oil. Because the shade of the wood sample was slightly darker than the hard maple I had, I chose to use Waterlox Tung Oil finish. This is a naturally darker oil and it gave me exactly the shade I was after.
Lower case

The lower case is simple frame and panel construction with the back consisting of five panels plus one large panel for each side. I pre-finish all of the panels before they are assembled in their frames. This way, when the humidity level drops, the panels will not be left with that faint line of unfinished wood. Because the case is seven feet long, a center leg with a leveler was added to prevent any sag in the middle over time. The leveler helps with any unevenness in the floor or if the piece is to sit on carpet, in time, this will migrate into the case and affect door alignment. This unevenness can become quite apparent with inset doors.

The bottom of the case is two large solid wood panels set in flush in the bottom frame. In order to keep a consistent margin between the frame and panels, the panels were anchored with a spot of glue along the front rail. That way, any expansion and contraction of the panel will only be noticed along the inside back rail where it will never be seen. The center shelf is anchored along the back and is sandwiched between two internal rails on the ends allowing it to move freely with humidity changes.

The face of the two large drawers was cut from the same board for grain continuity between the two drawers and finished to $\frac{3}{16}"$. The drawers were dovetailed together having $\frac{1}{8}"$ sides and back with a $\frac{5}{8}"$ poplar bottom. The end grain wood knobs were all individually turned and sized to fit the doors or drawers. I placed the knobs in from the edge between $\frac{1}{5} - \frac{1}{6}$ the width of the drawer and slightly above center.

Ball catch

I like to use a ball catch on inset doors. I used a solid barreled brass ball catch from Brusso Precision Hardware. Both male and female components slip into a $\frac{3}{16}"$ diameter hole. They can be tricky to get them all set to the same tension so that all the doors have the same feel.

To get this right, I drilled a #36 hole all the way through in the center of the female half of the catch and threaded it to 6x36. I drilled the door hole so that this female half will push into in the door slightly deeper than the length of the catch – roughly $\frac{1}{6}" - \frac{3}{16}"$. I then placed a small metal disk (like the head off of a roofing nail) in the bottom of this hole; and pushed the catch all the way in below the surface of the door. I inserted a 6x36 allen set screw into the catch, and used a $\frac{1}{16}"$ allen wrench to bottom out the set screw against the metal disk. As I continued to turn in the set screw, it pushed the catch up. I continue turning until I had just the right feel when I open and closed the door.

This same principle can be used on the ball half of the catch if the case member that the ball is set into is less than 2" and the hole that you would thread the set screw into would not be visible.

Upper case

The upper case is all dovetailed together. The upper corner thru dovetails were to be hidden by the crown, so this is a good place to practice your hand cut dovetails. The shelves are held in place by sliding dovetails. For the crown, I used a $\frac{3}{4}" \times 4 \frac{1}{2}"$ piece of flat stock. I cut a concave profile into it by making light multiple passes at 90° over a 10" table saw. I continued raising the blade until I had a $\frac{1}{4}"$ flat on each side. I ripped a 45° angle about $\frac{1}{2}"$ from one edge. This gives a nice shadow line to the bottom of the crown. Back up the crown up with a glue block along its entire length.

With case doors that open in the center, I like to make the center stiles slightly narrower than the side stiles.
Finishing

I used Waterlox Tung Oil finish on this piece mainly because of the darker hue that it gave to the wood for a closer color match. I used their sealer finishing oil for the first two coats and rubbed back with 400 grit. Then I switched to two coats of their finishing oil, rubbed back with 600 grit and 4/0 steel wool. This oil builds much faster than any other oil finish I have ever used. I'm not sure I would use this on figured wood because you cannot get the depth to bring out the grain that you would get if you used a thinner more penetrating oil.

Shipping

This was my first international shipment, and I had no clue as to how to go about it. The NH Office of International Trade will let you know of any restrictions on produces and pretty much guide you through the whole process. Initially I planned on doing all the packaging myself. However this piece was massive at 450 lbs. In the middle of the project, my clients also had ordered a small side table – only 67 lbs. So going by air was cost prohibitive at $2,500 plus. Ocean freight was less than a third of air transport, but it would require it to be hermetically sealed. The last thing I needed was for this to be in the top container of a ship with the sun beating down on it and exposed to salt air for ten days. Luckily a friend is the shipping manager for a hi-tech company that deals quite a bit in international trade. He recommended Horn International Packaging for all of the crating and to deal with the export paperwork. They made the whole process as painless as possible, from pick up at my shop to delivery to my client’s door.

While over here on holiday, my clients developed a taste for Maple syrup, something that is not readily available in Europe. And when you can find it, it is usually in small quantities and only one grade. So as a “thank you”, I included one quart of each grade of syrup and some maple candy. That should hold them at least until Christmas.

As of this writing, these two pieces are on the high seas somewhere in the middle of the North Atlantic. I hope my clients enjoy these pieces as much as I enjoyed building them.

Making Tops – continued

This helps to get rid of that bulky look to the doors when they are closed. I made the top rail the same width as the side stile and then increased the width of the bottom rail the same proportion as that between the center and side stiles. With the large doors, I needed to use a catch on both the top and bottom of the door. In this case, I needed to use both methods of adjustment for the catches.

The back is random width beaded T&G boards. I like to add a bit of subtle visual interest to my pieces, so I chose soft maple with some heart wood and slight mineral stain. It was just what I was looking for to break up that large boring back. These back boards were set into a mortise and tenon frame which was then set into a rabbet in the back of the case sides and top.
I need your help! Here are two tools I would love to own (and I suspect many of you would be interested too) but cannot find them for sale.

**Grinding Jig** – The first is the tool grinding jig which Terry Moore owns and demonstrates with all the time. There is curiously no company name and only the mysterious numbers marking the base casting. The beauty of this tool is that it advances the blade via the knob at the bottom.

Other jigs such as those reviewed recently in Fine Woodworking do not have this most important feature. This allows you to set the proper angle and then slowly advance the blade into the wheel and, if necessary, advance it further. I know many (I’d guess most) people hand grind their blades, but this seems like a huge improvement since it allows you to remove a very small and accurate amount of steel. It holds many sorts of blades, including chisels (the cutout allows for the handle of even a short bladed chisel).

Terry got this from Peter Korn about 15 years ago he guesses, but knows nothing about the manufacturer. I’ve even thought about having a machinist make a copy of this for me. Once you see Terry use it, you appreciate the time saving and the accuracy possible. So, have you ever seen one for sale? Any idea where it comes from?

**Acid Dip** – The second “tool” is related in that it sharpens files. This is an acid dip which removes a bit of the metal exposing a fresh edge on the file. I last bought this about 5 years ago and it seems the company has gone out of business (I have searched without luck).

I have a bottle which I still use, but it will be finished soon. I have asked chemist and jeweler friends of mine who have ideas, but nothing definitive. If it didn’t work so well, I would stop worrying about it, but believe me, it is like magic. Those expensive hand cut rasps are quite literally new (the line you see on the rasp is the end of the dip). Machine files which you would trash, cut like when you just brought them home. Hydrochloric? Muriatic? Nothing on the label gives it away and there is no MSD sheet to help.

So, who knows what this green goop really is? I’ll send you a sample if you can test it. Maybe we could go in business bottling the correct acid! We could name it *Magic Guild Dip*!

Call me, email me, or drop in and help me out! Thanks!

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**PS** – I spoke with Peter Korn and he believes that this jig may have been made by Wadkin in Bursgreen (hence the initials BG) and that it may have been part of a slow speed grinder. Hmm, the chase has a direction now! Peter Breu at 647-2327 or peterbreu@comcast.net

Photos by Peter Breu
Each time I begin to work on a set of chairs, I can still hear my mentor Pug Moore fondly recounting what his father had said to him about the art of chairmaking, “If you can build a chair, you can build anything.” And after tackling my first set of Chippendale, and later Queen Anne chairs, it became clear why he would say something like that.

Chairmaking offers unique challenges to the woodworker. To begin with, chairs are the only furniture type that are, in a sense, worn like clothing. They must be tailored to comfortably accept the human frame. So not only must a chair be able to comfortably accept the human frame of all shapes and sizes, but it has to be tough enough to hold up over time. Its joinery must be mechanically sound and strong to withstand the weighty stresses of everyday use. If a joint weakens in another type of furniture, it could be a source of embarrassment for the maker. But if the joinery and structure of a chair fails, someone could end up on the floor.

Recently, an order for a set of four cherry side chairs came in and I had the opportunity to test my chairmaking skills once again. It all begins with the design stage, the most enjoyable part of the process to me. The drawing paper is clean and the possibilities are boundless. But you have to start somewhere, and in this case, my client saw the prototype of the chair for my entry in the New Hampshire Furniture Masters 2005 auction/exhibit. We had our starting point. However, unlike the “show piece” chair made in solid mahogany and Cuban mahogany veneers with ebony accents, the client preferred solid cherry, and four inches shorter in height, to better match their décor.

**Design**

Making another, less formal version interested me. It reminded me of the common practice in the Eighteenth century to have “over the top”, highly stylized designs produced in the wealthy trade ports, while the same designs were being interpreted and crafted in a more understated way for the rest of society on the big city fringes and beyond.

The design intent for this chair was that it should be almost Shaker-like in its simplicity and lines, but with more subtle curves to lend a more comfortable and contemporary feeling.

I borrowed from my Eighteenth century chair patterns to determine the back leg shape as well as the curve of the backrest or “splat”. Dimensionally, the height of the original chair back is 40”
and approximately 17½” at the seat. The seat is 19” wide at the front and 15½” wide at the back.

In order to wrap your mind around the complexity of a chair and its compound joinery, you need to break it down by drawing it full-size from three views. I begin with the profile view, determining the back and front leg shapes, the curve of the splat and the height and meeting point of the side rail.

The front view shows the shape and silhouette of the back with the corresponding height and shape of the “shoe”, the back seat-height rail that supports and joins to the bottom of the splat.

The last view I draw is the plan view, the shape of the seat looking straight down from above. The plan view is key to understanding the angles of the compound joinery into the back legs.

**Pattern**

Once the drawing is complete, I make leg patterns from ¼” masonite and mark the location of the mortises for the side rail, the shoe, and the “crest” rail (the horizontal rail across the top, or “crest” of the chair back). I like to mark these out in ink.

From here, because I anticipate this chair to be a popular design and therefore made many times, I invested the time to make shaper or router pattern jigs with the help of the masonite leg patterns, which allow the legs to be efficiently and accurately reproduced.

**Making the Parts**

The legs must be sawn from 8⁄4 stock. Typically, I buy the widest longest boards I can find. Doing so insures uniformity in color and figure throughout the set of chairs and makes the finishing process much easier because there is little to no color variation. It also saves material because the deep curved shape of the back leg can be “nested” and sawn one after another yielding less waste.

The splats could be laminated from thinner layers of solid cherry and pressed in a vacuum bag. I chose to saw them out the old fashioned way – from solid stock. This process is made easier by using a tall, narrow edged fence clamped to the band saw table as a rub point. You can easily saw the splats out sequentially following the initial free-hand sawn curve. Thick stock is best to saw the splats consecutively yielding little waste and excellent uniformity in figure and color.

Integrity in chair joinery is extremely important. As a general rule, the mortises should be up to, but no more than, one-third the thickness of the piece being mortised. I used ⅜” thick mortise and tenons on the chair rail and leg joints, ⅜” joints where the crest rail joins into the back leg, and ¼” mortise and tenons for the splat joinery into the crest rail and shoe.

Stretchers are a smaller rail system used below the seat rails for increased strength; however, this chair design does not include stretchers. In this case, I like to either peg the mortise and tenon joinery, add glue blocks to the inside of the joint (as I did with these chairs), or both.

*Continued on Page 16*
Without exception, I always dry fit the assemblies first to be sure everything is perfect. I look to see that all the joints pull up tightly as they should. With that complete, I work through the glue up process in stages.

On chairs of this design, the back interior section is glued up first. The precision of the joinery, and complexity of the glue-up is further complicated in these chairs by the addition of narrower side splats that join on an angle to the shoe. The back legs are glued and clamped to the crest rails and shoes next. The front legs can then be glued and clamped to the front rail. And finally the side rails are glued up and clamped joining the front legs to the already assembled and glued back sections. At this point, it is a good idea to measure diagonally across the seat frame to check that the trapezoidal shape of the seat is symmetrical.

The chairs are ready for finish after a final touch up sanding. On cherry in general, I like to apply an oil based finish of some type because oil brings out the best depth and rich color and the cherry oxidizes naturally over time.

On these chairs, I first applied a danish oil, using a foam brush. After this dried for a day or two, I sprayed a coat of Seal Coat to act as a sealer and barrier coat. Seal Coat is a new waxless blonde shellac product put out by Zinzer Co.

Finally, I sprayed one coat of a pre-catalyzed lacquer with a dull rubbed sheen made by Lenmar Co. The results were so good there was no need to rub out the finish.

Lastly, the upholsterer I use applied a 2” high density foam to a ½” piece of plywood with the clients fabric. These were fastened with screws through the chair rails.

Finally, I could stand back and appreciate the results with satisfaction of a job well done. But one question still lingered after all that — “Can I really build anything?”

Assembling the back interior followed by the addition of the rear legs

Glue-up

Assembling front seat rail and legs

Finishing Up

Danish oil brings out the depth & rich colors of cherry
Overseas Competition

The rising price of scrap steel, and undervalued Asian currencies are taking a toll on small US machine manufacturers. Over the past five years, China's increased demand for steel has forced the price of scrap to double causing a drop off in American made machinery. However, at Williams & Hussey, we’re combating rising materials costs with high quality and intelligent marketing.

The Chinese have intensely developed their manufacturing capabilities in the past decade. Some say China’s low labor costs and undervalued currency will eventually level the US manufacturing industry. That may be extreme but, even with July's 2.5% revaluation effort, the yuan remains around 8 to 1 against the dollar. That has some economists and US manufacturers worried.

Because the yuan is so strong, the Chinese can afford to import raw materials from around the world more economically than Americans can. In fact the Chinese are importing on an unprecedented scale, at a rate that continues to grow 40% per year according to China Revaluation, an online publication. China's increased demand for imported scrap steel has caused the prices in that market to skyrocket and manufacturers across the globe are feeling the effects.

Scrap steel is an important commodity for US manufacturers because it is the primary raw material bought by US mini-mills. Mini-mills are quickly replacing fully integrated producers who can no longer bear the high costs of refining steel from iron ore. Forced to pay more for scrap, mini-mills have had to raise their prices.

A ton of scrap steel cost $97.42 in 2000. But by 2004, that price more than doubled to $213.68. Add these increased steel prices to China’s cheap labor costs and you can see why some domestic manufacturers have been forced to close their doors. In order to stay alive, US companies have had to find other ways to compete in a tough market.

There are two popular ways of dealing with overseas competition aside from adjusting prices. The first is to attack the competition. This means going at their reputation, bad-mouthing, mud-slinging and otherwise trying to tear them down. It’s not exactly the most ethical approach and as it turns out, not very effective. The alternative is to build up brand loyalty by promoting quality and reputation. By selling people the quality built into the company name, manufacturers have found customers who will weather any overseas storm.

Brand loyalty is what has kept us in business for over fifty years. Our customers are loyal because they know that we make a quality product. They have faith in the W&H name.

Because the Chinese are coming in with such low prices, it’s tough to compete dollar for dollar. So, instead of trying to be the lowest cost machine, we've positioned ourselves as the highest quality—an industry leader. Our castings come from a small foundry in Rhode Island. Our steel is M2 high-speed hardened to a 60-62 on the Rockwell. We use the best components and control almost all aspects of production. And one of the biggest reasons we’re still in business after 50 years is our product support. We offer a seven year warranty and outstanding customer service.

On the road, we stress that we’ve remained the same customer centered company over the years. If you need a part for your machine, you can call us and we’ll probably be able to ship something out the next day and walk you through the repair over the phone. If you want to assign a dollar value to that, ask a molding producer how much money he looses each day a machine doesn't run. And then ask him how many days it takes to get the right part from China, if they still make it.

There are thousands of people out there who are sick of sacrificing some of their expectations to save a few hundred dollars. By delivering a message of all around satisfaction and by living up to our promise, we have reached those people. It’s the best answer we have to overseas competition, and much more credible than any mud-slinging campaign we could come up with.

While other companies have gone out of business, sold product lines, or begun manufacturing in China, we haven't done any of that, and we’ve actually seen sales increase since overseas machines have come in.

If US manufacturers can get the message out about their quality, their products will survive the China situation. Thousands of people are still interested in a local manufacturer who can meet all their needs, and in the end, Made in America means Made to Last and people know that.
why rub a finished surface?

Rubbing Finishes

very applied finish, regardless of the application method used, is not perfectly smooth. Sometimes this lack of smoothness is barely detectable, but in other cases, particularly when spraying and brushing on a finish, the unevenness of the surface, in varying degrees, is more noticeable. This roughness causes the light to disperse in many directions; it distracts the eye and reduces the clarity of the wood surface below the finish. Flattening and smoothing the top coat of finish increase its luster and concentrates the amount of light reflected back to the viewer.

What surfaces usually get rubbed?

If I’m working on a shellacked piece, I usually rub the entire piece with steel wool and wax after a light sanding with 400 grit papers. If there is carving, I use pumice and a stiff bristled brush to get in the cracks and crevasses. With formal lacquered or varnished pieces like dining room tables and side boards, the top surfaces can be rubbed leaving the case sides or legs finished in satin just as it comes off the spray gun or off the brush.

Surfaces to be rubbed have to have a thick enough surface film to insure that the sanding and rubbing process doesn’t go through the surface film. For varnishes and when I say varnishes I’m talking about urethanes, this is usually at least three coats. For lacquers this may mean as many as six coats or more. The rule of thumb is the greater the percentage of solids to solvent, the faster the build of the finish film. If your goal is to achieve a flat glass like surface on woods with large pores like oak, mahogany and walnut, more coats than that will be necessary.

It is very important that the surface films you intend to sand flat and rub be sufficiently cured. Otherwise, it will be difficult to achieve a high sheen. Notice I didn’t say dry. Films may be dry to the touch but not cured to their maximum hardness. The type material used, the thicker the film and the lower the temperatures, the longer the cure time will be. The exception is catalyzed finishes. Catalyzed finishes that will not dry hard enough to rub and polish.

How do we rub finishes?

Rubbing a finish is labor intensive, but the effort is very rewarding. Generally, it involves sanding the finish to flatten it and then polishing the surface to various levels of sheen using polishing compounds.

The sanding uses very fine sand papers like 400, 600, 800, 1000, 1200 and 1500 grit. The 400, 600 and 800 grits are used dry. Use the new gold papers offered by 3M and Norton Abrasives. They cost more but clog less and last longer. Above 800 grit, wet and dry papers are used with soapy water. I use dish washing soap and water in a spray to lubricate the sand paper to reduce clogging and prevent the paper from sticking to the surface due to suction.

The sand paper must be firmly attached to a flat block. You can make you own by gluing some cork on to a wooden block but I think it is much easier to purchase...
one of the rubber sanding blocks that is curved on one side and flat on the other. They last forever, fit the hand and hold the paper well. I start with the finest grit that will cut the surface and yet not make too deep a scratch. Finer papers take longer to flatten a surface but their scratches require less sanding to remove. If the surface is quite uneven like the skin of an orange, then use a more aggressive paper. I may start with 400 grit papers and then skip to 1000 wet and dry, then go to 1500 wet and dry. Sand with compound with a clean soft cloth moving with the grain. Some mineral spirits on the cloth will help. There are finer grit compounds like 3M Finesse-it and Swirl Remover. Move up through the grits from courser to finer using the techniques already described. All of these compounds are available at your automotive supply or specialty stores that cater to the automotive refinishing trade.

It is very important to be able to see what is happening on the surface you are sanding. You need reflected light for this. Position the piece or the light source so it is on the other side of the surface you are sanding. For dry sanding, I use a rag or white cotton gloves to clear away the sanding dust. For wet sanding, I use a window cleaner’s squeegee. It also helps to have a fan blowing on the work or a blow dryer to dry the surface. These steps will help you see what progress you are making. The high areas will appear dull and the low, untouched areas will remain shiny.

A surface can be polished until it is as shiny as a car fender. It is actually easy to achieve a very high gloss on a surface than a semi-gloss sheen. Most of us would find a very high gloss or wet look unattractive on a piece of furniture. When I am rubbing out a finished surface, my goal is to first, flatten the surface to concentrate the reflectiveness of the light coming from the surface and second, to achieve a uniform fine and smooth scratch pattern. Perhaps another way to describe it would be to say that, at a micro scale, I want to take parallel mountains and valleys and then turn the mountains in to smooth hills with valleys. Rubbing finished surfaces takes a lot of practice and I encourage you to make practice boards just for that purpose. You will have more questions after practicing to be sure.

 fotos by Bruce Hamilton

**Using a pneumatic dual pad sander, wet/dry paper and soapy water**

You can use a nylon 3M white polishing pad and the rubber block mentioned above to apply this material. Or you can attach a piece of cotton towel cloth to the sanding block. Load the pad well and proceed just as you did when sanding. Let the compound dry on the surface and use lighter and lighter pressure as it dries. Remove any excess compound with a clean soft cloth moving with the grain. Some mineral spirits on the cloth will help. There are finer grit compounds like 3M Finesse-it and Swirl Remover. Move up through the grits from courser to finer using the techniques already described. All of these compounds are available at your automotive supply or specialty stores that cater to the automotive refinishing trade.

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**Radial Arm Saw**


**Shop Crane**


**Lathes**

Three old lathes. Long wooden bed lathe — old. Sears monorail wood lathe — 50’s. Metal turning lathe — old. Make an offer. spoofcircus@surfglobal.net

**Black Walnuts (nuts)**

I have a lot of Black Walnuts just off the tree. I’ve planted some in years past and now have young trees. I’m letting the nuts go for free. Jerry Burt: jerryaburt@yahoo.com
You have finally set up your shop just the way you want it. You have built your workbench. You have bought your table saw, thickness planer, jointer and band saw. You’re ready to get going on your first project, but before you begin, here are four hand tools that you will find very useful and will to acquire.

In many situations, hand tools are faster to use than our machines. While they require a bit of practice, they do not usually require any set up and test cuts. You pick up a hand tool and do what you need. Frequently, the job is over before you could set a fence and flick a switch. Each of these tools is sure to speed up your work.

Unfortunately, they are tools woodworkers often overlook. Two are used for roughing and two are for fine work. However, all are so handy that it would be impossible to describe all their uses. Put them to work and you will soon come up with jobs I haven’t thought of. As an added bonus, only one of these tools will cost over $100. The other three are priced much closer to $50.

**Draw Knife**

There is only one explanation for why old draw knives are so plentiful. Until this last generation, every woodworker owned and used one. They are so useful, I cannot imagine a shop without one. They are used for quick stock removal along the grain, across the grain, and for concave and convex curves. They will cut away heavy amounts of wood far faster than a band saw.

Here are couple of tips about using a drawknife. It is a slicing tool rather than a two handle hatchet. Hold it askew and draw the edge through the wood the way a butcher slices meat. You will be amazed at how effortlessly and cleanly it works. Use the draw knife with the manufacturer’s stamp up. Many woodworkers use the knife upside down, thinking that this gives them more control. Because they cannot take a heavy chip in this position, they sacrifice the tool’s most important ability – fast stock removal. Far better that you learn to use the knife the proper way. In a short while you will be able to take paper thin shavings that rival those made with a plane, or hog off ones as thick as your finger.

I also use my draw knife in a more unconventional way. If I have a board that needs to be trimmed along its length – for example one with an irregular, round edge – the draw knife allows me to quickly straighten that edge and make it ready for the table saw. I snap a chalk line and then, after determining the grain direction so I am working with it rather than against it, I use the knife as a lever, prying loose the waste close to the line. All I need is a few passes over the jointer and I have a straight edge.

Buy an old knife or a good replica made by a smith who understands the tool. Most modern knives are ground like chisels and this edge will not work well.

**Wooden Spokeshave**

This tool is as close to magical as any you will ever use. When working wood, it is the equivalent of using a photo editing program to work on a picture. You can smooth curves, you can blend elements together, or you can work pixel by pixel.

Do not confuse the wooden shave with the metal tool that bears the same name. They have very little in common. The wooden shave’s blade is set nearly parallel to the sole with the bezel up, so it has a low cutting angle. This makes it ideal for end grain. A sharp shave will take shavings from end grain so cleanly the chip holds together like those taken from edge grain.

A wooden shave is ideal in many of the applications where woodworkers would generally use a rasp. Only, this tool leaves a surface so fine it is almost ready for the finish. One of our students returned to tell us this story. In between visits, he had taken a class somewhere else in making a piece of Chippendale furniture with cabriol legs. The instructor showed the class how to smooth the leg with a rasp. When it was his turn, our student pulled out his wooden shave. The work was so effortless and fine...
One of the most common problems students have at our school is how to accurately square a board. More times than not, the problem is not the equipment being used, but rather the sequence of steps. I don’t want to make a simple procedure sound complicated, but if you stop what you are doing and think about each step you go through, there is a logical progression of steps to follow.

The idea is to end up with both faces of the board flat and parallel to each other. Then the long edges should be square with the faces and again parallel to each other. Lastly, the two ends want to be square with the edges and the faces, and parallel to each other.

The tool’s mouth is as wide as the sole. This allows it to track perfectly in a corner such as a rabbet joint or the shoulders on a tongue and groove. It is also ideal for trueing, trimming, or smoothing the flat fillets on moldings.

Shoulder planes are not cheap, and I would be leery of one that is. However, you will never wear it out and it will make an important difference in the quality of your work.

I teach what I call my seven step program. If you carefully follow these steps in order, you should end up with good results.

- **Step one** – rough cut to length plus one inch – gives you a shorter and easier board to work with. It usually means less waste when you flatten and plane the board.

## Shoulder Plane

No matter how precise your joinery, you regularly have to make some very fine adjustments. There is often no practical way to do this with machines. That is why every shop should have a shoulder plane. These planes have an extremely narrow mouth, which allows them to make cuts so fine the chips cannot hold together and crumble to dust.

As its name implies, a shoulder plane is used to snug up the shoulders on mortise and tenon joints. However, they are far more versatile. Used across a tenon, they will trim it to give you a friction fit. While doing this job, use the plane to chamfer the edges of the end of the tenon so it slides more easily.

At a recent Working Wood in the 18th Century conference at Colonial Williamsburg, I was surprised to see their master cabinetmaker, Mack Hedley, pull out a nearly identical tool.

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At a recent Working Wood in the 18th Century conference at Colonial Williamsburg, I was surprised to see their master cabinetmaker, Mack Hedley, pull out a nearly identical tool. Driving it with a mallet, he used it to quickly rough out the concave curves of the piece he was working on. This is a job most of us would have done on a band saw, but Mack did it with the part already glued in place and saved himself a tremendous amount of time over the way the rest of us would do it. The gouge Mack used was a modern copy of one that archeologists had excavated at the site of the cabinetmaker’s shop. It appears that the old boys too, knew how handy this tool was and is.

In using mine to shape parts, fit tenons, or whittle pins, I usually hold the parts against my chest and pull the wood against it. This gives me more control and it is safer when working around other people.

## Tips & Techniques

He soon had the other students— and eventually the instructor — asking to borrow it.

A shave can be pulled when whittling, but it is primarily a pushing tool. Its handles seem to imply that you grip those. Instead, pinch the body between your fingers with your thumb behind the blade. This position makes it a lot easier to control.

When setting up your shave, try this trick. Cock the blade so the cutting edge is higher on one side than the other. This setting gives you a high, medium, and low setting all in one. When you need to take a shaving of a different thickness, just move the shave to that point along the edge. It saves a lot of time making adjustments.

## Shoulder Plane

No matter how precise your joinery, you regularly have to make some very fine adjustments. There is often no practical way to do this with machines. That is why every shop should have a shoulder plane. These planes have an extremely narrow mouth, which allows them to make cuts so fine the chips cannot hold together and crumble to dust.

As its name implies, a shoulder plane is used to snug up the shoulders on mortise and tenon joints. However, they are far more versatile. Used across a tenon, they will trim it to give you a friction fit. While doing this job, use the plane to chamfer the edges of the end of the tenon so it slides more easily.

The tool’s mouth is as wide as the sole. This allows it to track perfectly in a corner such as a rabbet joint or the shoulders on a tongue and groove. It is also ideal for trueing, trimming, or smoothing the flat fillets on moldings.

Shoulder planes are not cheap, and I would be leery of one that is. However, you will never wear it out and it will make an important difference in the quality of your work.

At a recent Working Wood in the 18th Century conference at Colonial Williamsburg, I was surprised to see their master cabinetmaker, Mack Hedley, pull out a nearly identical tool. Driving it with a mallet, he used it to quickly rough out the concave curves of the piece he was working on. This is a job most of us would have done on a band saw, but Mack did it with the part already glued in place and saved himself a tremendous amount of time over the way the rest of us would do it. The gouge Mack used was a modern copy of one that archeologists had excavated at the site of the cabinetmaker’s shop. It appears that the old boys too, knew how handy this tool was and is.

In using mine to shape parts, fit tenons, or whittle pins, I usually hold the parts against my chest and pull the wood against it. This gives me more control and it is safer when working around other people.

Continued on Page 22
Floating Tenon Joints

Also known as a loose tenon joint, the floating mortise and tenon is a good joint because it provides relatively large areas of flat grained gluing surface. I have long overlooked some of the traditional joinery techniques because I’m intimidated by them. Mortise and tenon was one of the most favorite of the ignored. I was always put off by having to bore out a mortise hole and square it decently with a chisel. And cutting the tenon to be located and fit properly is a bit of a challenge. I know this is my own failing, but it’s real none-the-less.

Then I came across an article about floating tenons. A floating tenon is like a biscuit joint or a spline joint in that you make identical cuts on the two receiving members with a common tie-element between them.

The beauty of the floating tenon is that the mortise holes can be cut with a router and the ends left rounded. And the even greater beauty is that the tenon becomes a flat, rectangular piece of stock that can easily be trimmed to fit snugly using a planer. It should not require force to make it fit. After it’s planed to thickness and width, it’s simple to radius the edges with a roundover bit in the router. Awesome, I think.

This joinery can be used in tables to fasten the apron to legs, in cabinets for rail and stile connection, and well, anywhere that a normal mortise and tenon would be used. I’m delighted to have it as an asset in my bag of skills.

One advantage of loose tenon joints is that parts no longer need to be sized the best edge straight and flat. This means flattening the face of your board on a jointer. If you don’t have a jointer, or if your machine isn’t wide enough, you may do this with a hand plane. Use a straight edge and winding sticks to check your progress.

• **Step three** planes the board to an exact thickness – pretty self explanatory. Just make sure you put your jointed side down when the board first goes through the machine. Once the top face is flat and clean, you may assume it is parallel to the jointed face. Keep making progressive cuts by flipping the board over each time until you reach your desired thickness.

• **Step four** joints the best edge straight and square to the face. You must hold the board tight to the fence of the jointer so it will end up square with the face of the board.

• **Step five** is often overlooked – ripping to exact width. This must be done before cutting the ends. Typically when the ends are cut, you use one edge against the miter gauge to cut your first end, then you flip the board around and use the other edge against the gauge. If those edges haven’t been ripped parallel to each other, then the ends will not be square. It is extremely important that each board gets ripped to width on the table saw before cutting the ends. You may choose to add an extra ⅜” when ripping to clean up later with a hand plane or jointer.

• **Step six** cuts the best end square.

• **Step seven** cuts the other end square and to exact length.

If you have children, you know that rules are made to be broken. These steps are guidelines, and there are certainly situations where they will need to be altered.

For instance, if you have a long board that is going to be cut up into many short pieces, you may be better off skipping steps one and two, and planing the whole board to thickness before cutting it up.

**Another tip** – if you are making long narrow pieces, like door styles, I like to rip the pieces extra wide, then go back to step four and rejoint one edge, then rip the piece to exact width, etc. This way, if there is tension in the board, the first rip will relieve that stress and you can joint the slightly curved edge straight before ripping to exact width.

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**Five steps to a perfect tenon**

1. Rip a length of rough stock to rough width.
2. Resaw to just over the desired thickness and then surface to final thickness.
3. Joint one edge.
4. Rip to accurate width.
5. Round all four edges on the router table.

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10% Off to GNHW Members
The weather forecast for the day was not that great and needless to say, we were concerned about attendance. However, true to form, we had well over 75 members turn out for our annual Sept. meeting.

The day consisted of a morning presentation by Sue Dunbar, an auction, business meeting, lunch break, and a feature presentation by Mike Dunbar in the afternoon.

The day began with *A Common Dream But a Difficult Reality* by Sue Dunbar. This was an entertaining lecture on starting and running a woodworking business. See John Whiteside’s article on page 26 for more.

Prior to the auction, Roger Myers announced that we had received a letter from the AAW establishing an *Emergency Relief Fund* to aid AAW chapters and individual AAW members affected by the tragic Katrina storm. By an overwhelming vote, it was decided to send the funds from the auction to the new relief fund. Jon Siegel then began one of our barn burner auctions. We had members making a deal of a life time followed by those making “gift” bids to the Guild. At one point we had to have Jon take a break as the runners and money people could not keep up. In all we took in $1,226.25, all of which will go to the *AAW Emergency Relief Fund*.

At the business meeting, the nominating committee presented the slate of Roger Myers as President, Dave Anderson as Vice-President, Ed Jones as Secretary, and Peter James as Treasurer. No one was nominated from the floor and the slate was approved.

Reports were given by the various committees with the best news being that the Guild is in great shape financially even with some major outlays. Jim Seroskie gave an impromptu report on *The Old Saw*. He made a request of the membership to aid him in his *Ask This Old Saw!* column. He needs your questions. He has plenty of experts to provide answers but really needs questions. Please take some time to send Jim a one or two sentence question to keep this great section going (jseroskie@adelphia.net).

A quick lunch and we were treated to Mike Dunbar’s presentation *Hand Tools vs Machine Tools*. Mike’s shop was packed but we appreciated the highly entertaining and informative talk. Thanks Mike. See Greg Benulis’ article on page 24 for more.

As time flies by when you are having fun, it was way too quickly time to end the day.
Mike Dunbar on Hand Tools

Mike started his talk by describing how he (a French major) with no woodworking experience, became fascinated by Windsor chairs learning about their construction, history and then mastering the 18th Century tools used to make them. He started traveling the country teaching classes on how to make Windsors, finally ending up with the largest school solely dedicated to teaching Windsor chair making.

It has been his observation that most of the woodworkers have limited knowledge of hand tools and techniques. The biggest impediment to hand tool use is that people don’t know how to sharpen. To quote Mike, “sharpening is a gateway skill, without it you can’t really make use of hand tools.”

Mike spoke about his reasons for the use of sandpaper as a sharpening medium. Primarily, he selected it because it was something that was easily available everywhere he traveled to teach. Mike covered the definition of a sharp edge and the difference between the two primary types of edges, the chisel edge and the knife edge. He prefers to check for sharp by looking for the absence of reflected light off of the cutting edge because a perfectly sharp edge reflects no light.

Mike demonstrated sharpening on flat tools – a chisel and a plane blade. He then moved on to curved edges with a gouge and showed how he uses adhesive backed sandpaper on the side of a dowel to sharpen the inside edge. We also got demonstrations of sharpening of a scorp and draw knife.

After covering the parts that make up the traditional Stanley style hand plane, he talked about the differences in edge geometry needed for the various types of planes based on their use.

To close, Mike demonstrated how he surfaces and squares a rough board using hand planes. He did emphasize that in practice he uses a powered jointer and planer followed by a hand plane for fine finishing. We also got a demonstration of the use of a draw knife for roughing and shaping. He especially likes the draw knife for its ability to rapidly remove large amounts of wood while still being able to do delicate shaping.

All in all, Mike gave a thorough and thought provoking tutorial on sharpening and the use of a wide variety of edge tools.

Mike, his wife Sue and the staff of the Windsor Institute were gracious hosts once again for the guild and this author wishes him great success with his school and his woodworking. I am very grateful for Mike’s support of our guild and thank him for his hospitality.

BEGINNER & INTERMEDIATE GROUP

The BIG had its first meeting of the new season at Bob LaCivita’s shop in Nottingham, NH on Saturday, October 1st. The main topic for the day was drawer construction.

Bob finished construction of the dovetailed drawer he started at the May meeting. A groove was cut in the front and sides for the drawer bottom on the table saw first. Then the drawer frame was glued and clamped.

Bob showed us how to square everything up by adjusting the position of the clamps after measuring corner to corner on the drawer frame. A fielded panel was made from solid wood for the bottom to finish this project. Bob described how to use a shaper or table saw to make the beveled edge on the panel. However, he then demonstrated the traditional method using a bench plane to field the bottom panel.

The last part of the drawer series was the construction of a utility drawer made from ½” inch plywood using rabbet joints. These were cut on the table saw. This construction gave a very solid drawer frame in minimal time.

Next up, Greg Benulis gave a demonstration on how to sharpen a cambered edge plane blade using water stones. I use a Norton 1000 grit coarse water stone followed by an 8000 grit fine stone. The method was taught to me by David Charlesworth at Lie-Nielsen Toolworks. This consisted of using five point finger pressure on the blade held in an Eclipse honing guide. David’s “Ruler Trick” method of polishing a small area on the back of a flattened blade was used to complete the process.

Continued on Page 26
The Period Furniture Group’s first meeting of the season was at Dave Macrae’s newly built shop in Weare, NH. The first topic was from Sal Morgani, our travel director. Sal spoke about a new outing to be hosted by Al Breed to a wood/lumber supplier. Al will discuss how he goes about selecting and purchasing stock for a furniture project.

Next up, our host Dave Macrae spoke about the ongoing construction of his magnificent new shop. The building is forty feet by thirty feet with two floors, the first to be for power tools and the second floor dedicated to hand tool work. Heat for the building comes from a pellet stove on the first floor. He also had tubing for radiant heating installed in the first floor slab but has yet to have a need to use it. David supplements the 240 volt two phase power with a rotary converter giving him three phase power for the big tools.

John Whiteside showed us his latest project, a “bench on a bench”. Paul Miller and Ed Jones provided the motivation for this endeavor. Ed Jones also donated the maple stock for this project. There was a lively discussion with Ed, John and Paul about the use and features of their various designs. Thanks goes to Ed for his generous gifts of wood and plans for any Guild member wanting to build one of these small benches. John mentioned the generosity of fellow Guild members.

Paul Miller brought a Sack Back Windsor chair he is working on. Paul demonstrated techniques that he has been developing to satisfy his desire to bring predictability and repeatability to the construction of Windsor chairs. There were several jigs to aid in drilling for the back spindles and aligning the arm rest. He showed us how he drills holes for the stretchers with the legs in place on the chair. A key to this was a carefully placed alignment dot centered on the bit axis of his right angle drill.

Bill Daunis showed off some of his fine craftsmanship with a Chippendale chair based on an original that he saw in Antiques magazine. The chair is a ladder back with an upholstered slip seat. The wood is cherry. He is presently working on a Queen Anne chair based on an original made for the Porter family.

For the safety topic, Wayne Baker had two push sticks that he made and spoke about their importance and usage.

The main event was a talk by Geoffrey Ames on period furniture construction. Geoff is the founder of the GNHW Period Furniture group and hosted the first meeting at his shop in Stratford, NH on February 9, 2002. He has been working wood since 1959 with his interests centered on furniture made from 1679 – 1830.

Here are some tips from Geoff.

• Geoff recommended the use of scaled drawings, full size drawings and templates. When you are drawing plans for a chair, start with the top view, this will detail the joinery for you. Make your templates out of stable material such as ¼” plywood or hardboard so they hold up well enough for repeated use. Use multiple templates to work out your cuts in advance to maximize your lumber yield.

• The use of a story stick will help you avoid measurement errors.

• When you are ordering the tasks in a project, begin with the one that appears to be most difficult.

• When Geoff cuts the slot for a sliding dovetail, he starts with a dado and then cuts the dovetail using a shallow bushing riding in the dado to guide the router.

• He made the point that the major part of hand work is holding the work. To this end he recommended that anyone starting out build their own bench for the learning experience. He showed us several jigs and fixtures that he uses regularly for holding work.

Photos by Jim Seroskie
“… a strolling Indian went to sell baskets at the house of a well-known lawyer in my neighborhood. “Do you wish to buy any baskets?” he asked. “No, we do not want any,” was the reply, “What! exclaimed the Indian as he went out the gate, “do you mean to starve us?” Having seen his industrious white neighbors so well off, — that the lawyer had only to weave arguments, and, as if by some magic, wealth and standing followed — he had said to himself: I will go into business; this is a thing which I can do. Thinking that when he had made the baskets he would have done his part, and then it would be the white man’s to buy them. He had not discovered that it was necessary for him to make it worth the other’s while to buy them, or at least to make him think that it was so …” — Walden, H.D. Thoreau

How many of us, when we try to make money from our woodworking, are like Thoreau’s Indian? At this year’s annual Guild meeting, we had the opportunity to hear an outstanding presentation on how to start and run a successful woodworking business, presented by Sue Dunbar. Sue’s background is as a political consultant, marketing expert, and television personality. By her account, and by Mike Dunbar’s as well (he was standing in the corner of the room smiling and nodding), her working with Mike brought him out of his basement workshop and resulted in the creation of the extremely successful and highly regarded Windsor Institute, the only school of its kind devoted to Windsor chair making. But that’s just the beginning of the story for he and Sue run a fully-enrolled school, have hired an entire staff to help them run it, sell their own line of chair-making supplies and tools, and provide business consulting services to their students who come from all over the world.

The topic is clearly of interest to our members since about 70 people attended the special presentation. Sue rewarded us with a highly informative 28 step program for woodworking business success. Her points were hard-hitting, sobering, valuable, and — with the right attitude — doable.

One of the core ideas, the thing that Thoreau’s Indian missed, is that marketing and sales comprise a noble area of expertise and endeavor unto themselves. They are different from building. They are, however and in their own right, creative, fascinating, deep, and as worthy as any other professional activity, be it woodworking, law, or engineering. Marketing and sales are absolutely essential if your woodworking is to be more than a hobby.

Sue’s advice is blunt; you must do marketing. If you cannot do it yourself, get a partner who can. At least 20% of your total professional efforts must be devoted to marketing. Among Sue’s 28 points are some great and very specific ideas. For example, try making well-placed gifts. I once made a stepstool for our Rotary Club charity auction. It sold well and afterwards the unsuccessful bidders commissioned me to make stools for them, so I know Sue’s idea works.

It is vitally important to have your family behind you from the outset. Naturally, this involves sitting down and talking to them before you start.

However, another point is more subtle. When you graduate from a class, frame your diploma and put it on the wall. Not only will your customers see it, so will you and you will think, “Gee, maybe I am pretty good”.

Two of the most important areas are getting the word out and customer relations. According to Sue, paid advertising rarely pays. However, there are all kinds of ways to get media coverage. When considering this, it is important to figure out who you are and what you are selling.

For high-end work, the customer is not just buying a piece; they are buying an experience. They are actually buying a chance to interact with you, to participate, even if only vicariously, in the act of creation which, after all, is the part we woodworkers love. This suggests becoming friendly with your customers and making them aware of what goes into a chair that will last 200 years. Invite your customers to see you working on their piece in your shop. Sue says that people love to watch shavings being made, so get your planes tuned and sharp, and let your customer hear the gentle swish as the plane produces a continuous, translucent ribbon for them to examine. No one will find that experience at Wal-Mart, so in a sense, Wal-Mart cannot compete with you.

BIG – continued

In the last demonstration of the day, Bob showed us his bench mounted sharpening drawer for oil stones along with his sharpening technique. Bob uses a medium India stone for coarse work and a hard black Arkansas stone for fine honing. Both were lubricated with Norton honing oil.

For less critical edges, he uses a combination medium and fine grit India stone. This is also what he carries on site with him. There, he uses WD-40 for lubrication. Bob sharpens freehand and made very quick work of sharpening a Lie-Nielsen A2 plane blade and a chisel. He is both extremely fast and very consistent with his edges.

The next meeting will be on Dec. 3, at Bob’s shop in Nottingham, NH. The main topic will be frame and panel door construction, fitting and hanging. If you are planning to attend, please drop Bob an email at rlacivita@comcast.net.
Upcoming Guild Meetings

- Nov. 19 – Sand Shaded Inlays with Janet Collins, Workshop Program Director & instructor at North Bennet Street School. Meeting is at Pinkerton Academy in Derry, NH.
- February 18 – Routers: Things you did not know you could do with them with Alan Mitchel & Bob LaCivita at Homestead School in New Market, NH.
- March 18 – Small Meetings (five meetings TBA).
- April 22 – Hardware Selection & Installation with Barb Rockwell from Horton Brasses. Location TBD.
- May 12-13 – Turning Symposium at Pinkerton Academy in Derry, NH.
- June 17 – Summer Trip to Nichols & Stone (furniture maker) in Gardner, MA plus Starrett (tool maker) in Athol, MA.

Last Chance for Discounted Woodworking Books — Nov. 19

I’ll be taking orders for Taunton Press and Sterling Publishers woodworking titles until the November Guild Meeting. This is a once per year opportunity to get woodworking books at a 40% discount off of the list price. I’ll have catalogs at the meeting, or you can check the publishers’ web sites (www.taunton.com & www.sterlingpub.com) for titles you would like to order. E-mail me your choices.

Please include the exact title, author, format (hard or soft cover, DVD or VCR), product code for Taunton, ISBN# for Sterling, and your phone number. Books will arrive early December and be available for pickup at my home in Mont Vernon or at a future Guild meeting.

Tony Immorlica – Book Coordinator
603-6763-9629 (evenings) or annette_and_tony@peoplepc.com

Period Furniture

The next meeting is Nov. 12 at Dave Anderson’s shop in Chester, NH 9:00-12:00. Dave will present his latest project. Details including directions are e-mailed to the group approximately ten days before each meeting. To get on the group e-mail list contact...

John Whiteside
603-679-5443 or johnin fremont@comcast.net

Beginner & Intermediate Group

The next BIG meeting will cover frame and panel door construction, fitting and hanging. The February meeting will continue with our door topic. April & June topics are TBD for now.

The next meeting is Dec. 3 at Bob LaCivita’s shop at 365 Stage Road (Rt 152) Nottingham, NH from 9:30 am to 12:00 noon. Please e-mail or telephone (before 9 pm) if you plan to attend.

Bob LaCivita
603-942-1240 or rlacivita@comcast.net

Granite State Woodturners

Meetings are 9:00 am to 1:00 pm on the fourth Saturday of the odd numbered months. The next meeting is Nov. 26. The meeting place changes each time. Contact Jon Siegel to be added to the e-mail notification list.

Jon Siegel – big@proctornet.com

Turning Reference Books

John McAlevey submitted the following clarifications from the GSWT Critique meeting in July.

- Ceramic Form authored by Peter Lane published by Rizzoli International Publications.
- Eighty Eight Turnings authored by Bob Stocksdale published by The Museum of Craft and Folk Art, San Francisco, California.

Period Furniture Reference Books

Geoffrey Ames recommended several books at the September Period Furniture meeting.

- Queen Anne Furniture: History, Design and Construction authored by Norman Vandal.
- American Furniture of the Eighteenth Century authored by Jeffrey P. Greene.

GNHW Scholarship Program

It’s not often that our Scholarship Committee has news, let alone a lot of news. So, let’s begin with the most exciting. Dave Frechette has been awarded the Roy Noyes Scholarship to pursue a full time, one-year program at the Center for Furniture Craftsmanship; George Saradakis was awarded the Peter Bloch Scholarship to study privately with Betty Scarpino.

The New England Association of Woodworking Teachers was awarded an educational grant. The grant will be paid to Sullivan Creative, a creative marketing services firm. Sullivan Creative is developing a program to promote woodworking education and provide training to teachers on how they can “market” their programs and their students work to their local community and beyond.

Finally, I would like to introduce the committee, as there have been some changes recently. The scholarship committee is comprised of five members. They are – Peter Bloch, Peter Breu, John McAlevey, Bob Jarrett and myself. Bob Jarrett has stepped down after chairing the selection committee for six years. Bob will remain on the scholarship committee. I would like to thank Bob for all that he has done for us. Ed Epremian, who has served on the committee since it’s inception, has also resigned and we would like to also thank him. For those who might not know, Ed was instrumental in the application process for our IRS non-profit status.

John McAlevey, a founding father of the Guild, has been appointed to the committee and has agreed to chair the selection committee. After December first, all applications should be sent to John. Peter Breu and I will remain on the selection committee. – Jack Grube.