A Really Big Trestle Table
Clamping Techniques

The Old Saw
The Newsletter of the Guild of New Hampshire Woodworkers

new hampshire woodworking schools • shellac
a woodworker’s journey • tool review • sighting your table saw

Calendar

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Jun 16  Summer Trip
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Building an Island
project and photo by John Whiteside

Bread & Butter
combining production with artistic expression

shell chest and photo by Elizabeth Heatherington
Making a Difference

When I thought about writing this issue’s President’s Message, I decided to wait until after the turning symposium in order to see if I was particularly inspired by something at the event. Well, I’m glad I waited as inspiration was in good supply!

First, despite record breaking rains in New Hampshire, we had a packed house with about 375 registered for the symposium! But the number of visitors, demonstrators, and pieces displayed in the instant gallery all pale in comparison to the number of hours of well orchestrated hard work by the team of volunteers who put together this showcase event. This is another example of the kind of teamwork and cooperation that make our Guild the wonderful organization that it is.

Then, we had some wonderful examples of the impact that organizations like ours can have in the community in general. Friday, youth day at the symposium, saw a large number of the younger generation have the opportunity to get up close and personal with well known woodturners. Does this kind of exposure and interaction make a difference? You bet it does! Just look at the youngest of our demonstrators at the symposium, 18 year old Graham Oakes. Graham, who will graduate from Pinkerton Academy this year has already made quite a name for himself in the world of woodturning and has been featured in papers and on television in NH. A great deal of credit is due to Jack Grube and the staff at Pinkerton for maintaining such an outstanding woodworking program at the school.

The Guild and our members have also played a role in a number of ways. A grant by the Guild enabled Pinkerton to bring noted woodturner Beth Ireland to Pinkerton to work with and inspire students interested in woodworking.

Some of the proceeds go to Pinkerton in support of their woodworking program. One look at Graham’s work, or listening to him during his demonstration is all the proof needed to show the benefits that an organization like the Guild can bring to a community. So, enjoy the Guild and all the benefits of membership and be proud of the differences we can help to make, one woodworker at a time!

Bylaws Revision

The Steering Committee has updated and passed a revision to the Guild bylaws. The complete revision is included as an insert in this issue of The Old Saw (June, 2006). It’s adoption is subject to a majority vote of the general membership at the Sept. 23, 2006 annual meeting.

The motivation for this update was to bring our guiding document into conformance with current practice. Although most changes are minor, the more substantive revisions are summarized here. – Jim Seroskie

1. Removal of references to juried exhibits or shows (II-1 & III-1).
2. Restriction of the compensation prohibition to officers (II-3).
3. Allowing the Steering Committee discretion to extend the new membership term (III-2).
4. Clarification of the procedure to change membership fees (III-3).
5. Clarification of the cutoff point for non-renewing members to receive the newsletter (III-4).
6. Clarification of who has responsibility to approve and maintain lists of honorary members (III-5).
7. Addition of email as an approved means of delivering meeting notices (IV-4).
8. Definition of the makeup and size of the Steering Committee (V-1).
10. Specification of the procedure to remove an officer (VI-3).
11. Clarification of the duties of the Treasurer (VI-8).

NHFMA Exhibit & Technical Talks

The New Hampshire Furniture Masters Association is pleased to present a set of technical talks for woodworkers and those interested in the details of furnitremaking in conjunction with the Beyond Tradition: New works by the New Hampshire Furniture Masters exhibit. The exhibit runs July 13-26 at the NH Historical Society’s Tuck Library – 30 Park St., Concord NH.

The event will be hosted by five members of NHFMA – Garrett Hack, David Lamb, Ted Blachly, William Thomas and Brian Sargent. It will be held Saturday, July 15 at the exhibit.

Doors open at 9:30 am for viewing the exhibition. The talks will run from 10:00 am to 11:30 am followed by walk thru tours and a chance to “pick the brains” of the makers.

Topics
- Sculpting legs, his personal approach – Brian Sargent - slides included
- Wood movement and techniques for controlling in furniture design – Ted Blachly – slides
- Building upholstery frames – the how and why – William Thomas
- Design and details – Garrett Hack & David Lamb

Please RSVP to Chris MacLeod at 603-856-0604.
Summer Trip

The June trip will be Friday, June 16th. We will meet at the L. S. Starrett Company (www.starrett.com) in Athol, MA a little before 10 am for a two hour tour. Starrett makes precision measuring instruments along with other products. Most of us have a Starrett square. The Starrett plant is not a store, but we may be able to place a bulk order.

After the Starrett tour, we will head for Gardner with a lunch stop en route. If anyone would like to suggest a place, that would be great, otherwise we will send an advance team down to scout the route.

Following lunch, there will be a tour at Nichols & Stone (www.nicholsandstone.com), a furniture manufacturer since 1857. This will give us a chance to see the way the big boys make their stuff.

Please let me know if you will be going on the trip as soon as possible so we can make appropriate reservations for lunch. I also need to know if you would like to carpool (drive or ride) and if you would be interested in a group purchase of Starrett tools. – Dave Frechette – dfrech@together.net

16th Annual Wood Days Festival at Canterbury

June 24th and 25th will mark the 16th year that Canterbury Shaker Village has sponsored and run the full weekend Wood Days Festival. This is the first time that Dave Emerson is not running the show, having retired and left the event in the hands of Will Frey – another shaker village employee. By the time you receive this issue of The Old Saw, the event will only be three weeks away. There will still be enough time to register as a vendor or demonstrator by contacting Will at wfrey@shaker.org or calling him at 603-783-9077 x202. Woodworkers of all types are welcome to display their crafts and demonstrate.

This year in conjunction with the main event at the village, you will have the opportunity to visit David Lamb’s shop and view his collection of 19th century woodworking machinery. Dave is a guild member, a founder and member of the NH Furniture Masters, has been featured on HGTV’s Modern Masters show, and has been featured in articles in The Wall Street Journal, Fine Woodworking, and Antiques Magazine.

Wood Days is noted for a wide variety of displays and demonstrations including, bandsaw lumber milling, timber framing, various types of turning, furniture making, wood canvas canoe restoration, scroll saw work and steam bending. Other things to keep you occupied include continuous live music, guided tours of the village, and displays by wood vendors, woodworking schools, and toolmakers. This year, for the first time, the two days of the event will be tied together by a late afternoon gathering on the lawn in front of the Summer Kitchen. Open to both visitors and participants, it will feature live music, a chicken barbeque, and the chance to relax and enjoy the surroundings. It’s free except for the reasonably priced barbeque. – Dave Anderson

73rd Sunapee Fair

It’s coming up sooner than you think. The guild’s participation in the nine days of the League of NH Craftsmen’s 73rd Sunapee Fair is the major highlight of our summer season. We need a lot of help with two 20’ x 20’ tents to staff our commitment to provide multiple and continuous demonstrations. Last year, 46 different members participated and it was our largest success to date. This year we need to at least equal previous efforts. There is still time to volunteer for both demonstrating and acting as a Guild Representative – names must be in to me by July 1 at the latest.

For new members, here is how Sunapee works. The League gives us two tents in what is the premier spot at the fair. We fill one area with tables covered with prizes which are raffled off to the public and which provide funds for our scholarship program. These raffle items are made and donated by guild members. Guild representatives sell the tickets and answer questions from the public about the guild, its programs, how the raffle proceeds are used and about how to join the guild.

The majority of the tent space is filled with workbenches and lathes for demonstrating. We usually have three lathes running – both spindle and bowl turning. The woodcarvers demonstrate their crafts and other demos include such things as dovetailing, toolmaking, shaker box making, furniture making, scroll sawing, and almost any other wood related craft conceivable. Our success depends upon how many of you are willing to volunteer and take part. This is a fine opportunity for those who wish to learn demonstrating and hone their skills in front of a live audience. You don’t have to be a super expert to demonstrate, though you do want to be reasonably confident of your skills.

– Dave Anderson

Raffle Donations
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Demo & Guild Reps
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Q JIG VS FIXTURE – What is the difference between a jig and a fixture? – Louis Duplessis

DJ Delorie replies: DJ found this description at DYNAMETWORK.com [Reprinted with permission from DYNAMETWORK.com]...

Jigs are devices that hold and move a work-piece in relation to a tool. Often they are designed as carriages that slide. Jigs act as a guide for the tools that cut and shape the wood, and they are ideal for repetitive tasks. By contrast, fixtures are static devices that hold the wood in stationary position in relation to a tool. Some of the more typical examples of fixtures are fences -- such as a ripping fence on the table saw.

A good way to remember the difference is with the mnemonic: "A jig slides; a fixture guides."

Dave Anderson replies: I suspect that most people use the terms jig and fixture interchangeably. In a more proper sense, a fixture is fixed or stationary like a light fixture and a jig is movable and/or removable. Another way of looking at it is that a workpiece is moved to a fixture while a jig is moved to the workpiece.

Jon Siegel replies: A fixture holds the workpiece but doesn’t have anything to do with locating the tool. For example if you want to drill a hole at an angle, you could build a wedge to hold the workpiece at that angle. But you still have to line up the drill in the usual (manual) way. So the wedge is a fixture.

Q WOOD FOR TURNING — What kind of woods should be avoided for turning? – Anon

Al Breed replies: It depends on what you are turning. If you need strength without detailed ornament use a strong wood like oak or hickory. If you want a turning that will take a lot of detail without breaking at the fillets, use maple, birch, mahogany or another fine grained wood. Basically ring porous woods will not hold detailed elements without breaking.

A wood like pine is good for turning but will be easily damaged and is not strong enough for small scale work, but is good for large architectural elements that get painted.

Jon Siegel replies: Wood with distinct hard and soft layers can cause problems for the woodturner. Most notably in this category are douglas fir, yellow pine and redwood. These woods tend to become lumpy when you sand them because the soft layers wear away so much faster than the hard parts. The solution is to sand less, but it can be difficult to obtain a good finish from the turning chisel because of chipping adjacent to the soft layers.

An extremely light cut with a perfectly sharp chisel is required for good results. Even ring porous hardwoods, such as oak and ash, can cause similar problems. Conversely, the best woods for turning are the diffuse porous smooth textured woods such as maple, birch, beech and cherry.

Brad Vietje replies: I would avoid any wood that presents a danger to you, or to your audience, if demonstrating. This would include unsound wood with discernible cracks that might fly apart during the turning process. I recommend a careful inspection for cracks and voids, and turning a questionable piece slowly until the soundness of the wood can be judged. When turning wood with bark inclusions, rotten areas, or voids, do not stand in line with the spinning wood. Lathes that allow the turner to turn outboard or otherwise stand off the end of the lathe, out of the firing line, are best for any questionable turning blanks, as the wood will usually fly away from you if it blows apart.

When demonstrating, avoid woods that are likely to cause problems to others. This includes the more toxic species, such as walnut or exotics, like the rosewoods, to which many people develop allergic reactions, as well as spalted wood. These woods should only be handled when all lungs present are protected by dust collection and respirators.

Q EXTERIOR DOOR MOISTURE — How can I prevent rain, snow and moisture from getting into the groove where the stile and rail meet the raised panel on exterior panel entrance doors? – Anon

Roy Noyes replies: I wonder what caused this question. Is it an actual or an imagined problem? I lived in a 200 year old house and had paneled exterior doors that were in excellent shape. They were painted on the outside but I am sure that they had no other special treatment. The only way, which I know of, to be sure of preventing the problem described is to put on an aluminum storm door. This will prevent liquid moisture from getting into the joints but will not prevent dimensional changes due to changes in humidity. Rot in this joint is not usually a problem.

Varnish and other clear finishes do not hold up well on exterior doors because the rays of ultra-violet light break the molecular chains in the finish and it peels, requiring refinishing every few years.

Painted doors are not affected by UV light but may have a problem if the panels are “glued” to the rails by paint. Then differential expansion, due to humidity or other moisture, between the long grain in the rails and the cross grain in the panels may cause the panels to crack. This is especially true if the panels are made from flat sawn boards. In many old houses, they minimized this problem by making the panels from quarter-sawn lumber, which has about one-half the dimensional width change of flat sawn lumber.
I have read many articles on how to sharpen blades, how to make dovetails, tenons, etc., but I have never read an article on how to start a project. How do you approach that special piece, the one you saw in a magazine or at a museum? You may have been intimidated by its complexity, the intricate parts, the carving.

What I hope to do in this and subsequent articles is to take you on a journey with me. One that started when I first saw a picture of John Townsend's Tall Case Clock. Along the journey I will share with you what I have learned and my experiences. Hopefully you can benefit from them, and if you get just one idea that helps you, it will be worth the trip.

Our journey begins at the Winterthur Museum near Wilmington, Delaware. My wife Kathy and I are standing in front of this beautiful Tall Case Clock. We are looking at all the details taking notes and making sketches. Next to us are two gentlemen. One turns to the other and says, "I could never make that," then he proceeds to tell his friend why "it's too complicated, I don't know how to even start, it would probably take too long to learn." With that they both left.

The next day on our long trip home, Kathy and I were still talking about the clock. Where can we buy the works, what books might have photos of the interior, how can we get plans, etc.? Then I started thinking about the gentlemen who said he couldn't make it. Without knowing him or his abilities, I came to the realization that he was right, he can't do it. Why? Because he really believed he couldn't.

Our minds are a wonderful thing. But it has one major flaw. It doesn't know what the truth is. It believes only what we tell it as the truth and then it will act accordingly. Once the man told himself that he could not make the clock, his mind accepted it as true and then proceeded to give him excuses as to why he was right no experience, no knowledge and so on. I on the other hand really wanted to make the clock, believed that I could do it and my mind started working on ways to make it happen.

The way to approach a project is first and foremost with the right frame of mind. You have to have a burning desire to do it and you must really believe that "you can do it". Keep repeating to yourself that you can do it. You should apply this way of thinking not only to the project as a whole but also to each component.

Once you believe you can make it, you will automatically start to think of ways to get the knowledge of how to make it. Be it books, classes, talking to people who have done it, etc. Then it's just a matter of practice. I carved six flame finials before I was satisfied with the ones that were to go on the clock. Having never carved before, I kept going because I believed I could do it and it was just a matter of time.

One thing I learned about practicing. If you want to learn how to carve a shell in mahogany, you don't waste your time by first practicing to carve a flower in basswood. You get a scrap piece of mahogany and carve a shell and another and another and as many as it takes until you are satisfied with your results.

In subsequent articles I will discuss organization, the four components of a successful piece and plans.

So remember the next time you see a piece of furniture you really want to make, the first thought in your mind should be "I can do it."
Those who are hunters know that before hunting season comes you have to take your rifle out and make sure that the bullet goes where your sights say it is going to go. Your table saw is the same. It needs to be sighted in when you first get it, either new or used and on a regular basis after that. A properly tuned saw will give predictable cuts, both rip and crosscut.

The equipment that is required to do an exact job is not expensive. You can make a simple alignment tool from some hardwood scraps and a $9 dial indicator. This will give results that are within half a thousandths or less, much more accuracy than is needed.

Alignment Tool

The table saw alignment tool is shown in Figure 1. It consists of two pieces of hard wood ½˝ x ¾˝. The holder for the indicator is about 8˝ long and the crosspiece is about 5˝ long. The holes in the holder are spaced ¾˝ apart. They are held together with a ¼˝ carriage bolt that is countersunk into the bottom of the crosspiece. See Figure 2.

To get straight and accurate cuts on the table saw, the blade, the miter slot and the fence need to be parallel. You will notice that I said miter slot and not slots. It is quite possible that the two miter slots will not be perfectly parallel to each other. For that reason I do my alignment procedures using the left slot because that is the one that is used most of the time.

On a cabinet type saw, the trunnions are attached to the cabinet and moving the table makes adjustments. On a contractor type saw the trunnions are attached to the table and moving the trunnions makes adjustments.

UNPLUG THE SAW BEFORE STARTING THIS PROCEDURE

Arbor Trueness

One of the first things to check is the trueness of the arbor. Putting the indicator point near to the center of the blade and rotating it by hand using the arbor nut can do this. This should be within the 0.003˝ to 0.005˝ range or less. If it is not, you will have a significant wobble in the blade. If the arbor is good, you can then check the flatness of the blade by placing the indicator point near the edge of the blade inside the line of gullets and again rotating by hand. A good blade will have very little wobble. See Figures 3 and 4.
Table Alignment
To get the saw blade parallel to the miter slot, start by raising the blade to the maximum height and marking a tooth with a marker. I use the marked tooth to make the measurement at the front of the saw and then rotate the blade to bring that tooth to the back. This eliminates any errors caused by wobble in the blade.

The alignment tool should be loose in the slot. Hold it against the right side of the slot when measuring. This should be the same side that you hold sled and jigs against when cutting. If corrections are to be made, loosen the trunnion or table bolts as appropriate and nudge with a block of wood and hammer. It may take several tries to get the desired result. When you have the two measurements the same or as close as you wish, re-tighten the bolts and then re-check the measurements again. If they have changed, repeat the above steps until you are satisfied.

Fence Alignment
To align the fence, lower the blade and bring the fence over to where it will contact the alignment tool in the left miter slot at the front of the table. Clamp the fence in place and note the reading on the indicator while holding the indicator against the right side of the slot. Move the indicator to the rear of the table along the slot, holding it against the right side as you slide along. Take note of movement of the indicator dial and the reading at the rear of the table. Movement as you slide along the slot, indicates waves in the fence surface.

I like to have the fence perfectly parallel to the blade, but others like to have the fence tapered up to 0.005” to the right, front to rear. If you do go with the taper, remember that you can not use the fence on the left side of the blade without correcting for this. See Figure 5.

Tape Measure Alignment
The last thing to check is the alignment of the tape measure and indicator that allows cuts to be measured with the fence. Take a board and rip it at a given measurement on the fence indicator. See Figure 6. Then measure it with a dial caliper and make any necessary corrections to the indicator on the fence. See Figure 7.

Repeat the test until you can get within 0.005”.

Splitter
I use a home made splitter to keep rip cuts from binding on the blade and it reduces the tendency to kick back and also eliminates burning of the wood that happens with some woods, especially fruit woods. The splitter is 0.005” thicker than the blade kerf – 0.130” for a 1/8” blade. See Figure 8.

It is centered on the blade. This puts a slight pressure on the board towards the fence as it goes by the blade and prevents the blade from contacting at the rear of the cut. See Figure 9.

This whole procedure takes little time and will give you a saw that makes accurate and repeatable cuts, quickly and easily. You will find that you can rip more accurately using the fence indicator and tape measure, than you can measuring from a blade tooth to the fence and in less time. I do check the distance with a rule to verify the distance as in measure twice and cut once.
Whether you are a beginner just finding your way into the woodworking world, or an experienced craftsman looking to add a new skill to your repertoire, there is a class out there that can help you up and over your learning curve. This article is the first of a series that will cover the options a woodworker has when choosing a school, a course, or even one of the extensive programs that are offered. As this series will show, there is almost no need to compromise when selecting a school in the New England area.

McLaughlin Woods

The joy Tom McLaughlin finds in his work is apparent in his natural tendency to teach. This was clear to me as he crouched down on the floor of his shop to show me the figure in a 4” x 24” x 16’ plank of mahogany he’d just purchased. As I interviewed Tom, he was very eager to show me his most recent projects, and answer any questions I had.

Tom learned to work with wood from master craftsman Preston “Pug” Moore, in North Carolina. After his apprenticeship, Tom and his family moved back to New England. They have since settled down on a beautifully wooded lot in Canterbury, NH. His 30’ x 60’, three story shop has been designed specifically to accommodate both Tom’s work as a professional furniture maker as well as his ambitions to share his craft as it was shared with him. While the first floor is dedicated to housing Tom’s large woodworking machines, the second floor, with its 11’ high ceilings and natural lighting, is an ideal area for class to be held.

Of the schools in NH, McLaughlin Woods stands out as offering the most complete selection of woodworking courses. Over the next six months, the school will host classes on woodcarving, veneering, turning, finishing, joinery, chairmaking, hand plane use and specific furniturermaking projects. While Tom teaches the majority of classes, he also enlists the help of fellow woodworkers to teach courses in the area of their expertise. Terry Moore, Garrett Hack, David Lamb, Jon Siegel, and Clive Hamilton are among Tom’s guests.

Workshops are generally limited to nine students, with the occasional exception of a topic that allows for a slightly larger number. The shop doors open at 7:30 am and close at 6:00 pm. Students are taught from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm with a lunch break at noon. The number of days a class meets may range from one to six depending on the complexity of the subject.

The Homestead School

The Homestead School is located on a farm in Newmarket, NH that was originally granted to the Mitchell family by King George. The farm has been in the family since they settled in 1768. Alan Mitchell, the school’s founder and director, realized his passion for adult education while teaching night classes at Billerica High School where he taught woodworking for nine years. In addition to running The Homestead School, Alan also manages to continue his work as a professional cabinetmaker and custom builder.

The Homestead School meets in a restored timber framed barn that is specifically set up as a woodworking school. Workbenches are aligned in neat rows facing the front of the room, and a separate machine room is organized to accommodate a number of students.

Alan’s school is similar to McLaughlin Woods, in that it offers courses on a variety of topics, and hosts some of the same professional woodworkers as instructors. In addition, Alan has developed a Comprehensive Ten Week Course In Woodworking designed to prepare students to begin a career in woodworking. Students will learn about the characteristics of wood, proper use of hand tools and woodworking machinery, and furniture design. Students will also begin to learn to draw up working plans and carry them out using professional woodworking techniques. Other extras offered by The Homestead School include a five day timberframing workshop with P. David Richards and a week long Kids’ Camp.

Alan has made a significant attempt to make The Homestead’s classes both accessible and affordable. Many of the workshops are scheduled to take place...
on weekday evenings or meet during the weekend. *Woodcarving with Paul Miller*, for example, will meet six times on Monday nights from 6:30 to 9:30 pm. At $180 the class also offers an exceptional value.

**The Breed School**

Allan Breed is an expert in the field of period furniture. For the past thirty years, collectors and dealers have sought his opinion on the authenticity of original pieces. He has lectured at numerous museums and auction houses, including Sotheby’s and Christie’s. All the while, Allan has worked to hone his woodworking skills, specializing in the restoration and reproduction of 18th century furniture. Presently, Allan works as a consultant to clients willing to pay for authentic pieces, and his skill as a woodworker has brought him work measuring and copying original pieces, often for the same client he is asked to advise.

The Breed School is located in Rollinsford, NH, in the old Salmon Falls Mill. Allan’s studio is in the upper corner of the mill. It is well organized and well lit, with tall windows along two walls. Allan was conscious to emphasize the importance of natural light when carving. He also emphasized the class size – six. I counted the benches. In his studio, where the only machines are grinders to sharpen hand tools, The Breed School promises to be the most intimate woodworking school in NH.

“I teach 18th Century furnituremaking the way it was done,” Allan assured me. On the bench in front of us was a copy of a tea table originally made by John Goddard. I asked if he required students to have woodworking experience. “It’s all in the attitude. If students think they can do it, I’ll be able to teach them the process I use.” Allan’s process includes detailed measured drawings, patterns, and plastic castings used to model intricate carvings.

While all these items are made available to students, plans and castings can be purchased on Allan’s website.

Students of The Breed School stand to gain nearly as much from Allan’s extensive historical knowledge as they will from his instruction about woodworking technique. When I visited, I could tell our discussions about his work were just scratching the surface. I had to restrain my curiosity in order to keep our conversation on topic. “While the students are here, I don’t hold anything back. I tell them everything I know. I think the students really appreciate the history.”

Classes at the Breed School, during the weeks they are scheduled, meet from Monday to Friday 8:00 am to 5:30 pm. Each student is also given a key and allowed to use the studio as they please.

**The Windsor Institute**

Mike Dunbar is recognizable to most NH woodworkers. Whether we have seen him with Roy Underhill, Norm Abram, or Martha Stewart; or read about him in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, or *Fine WoodWorking*; or picked up one of the seven books he has written, chances are we have caught him adding to his credentials as the “Crown Prince of Windsors,” a name given to him by the *Woodworker’s Journal* in 1999.

Mike’s recognition is well deserved. He is almost single handedly credited with the revival of Windsor chairmaking, a craft he began in 1971. He describes the work of the Institute as “unique.” He continues, “our purpose is not only to teach, but to support, sustain, and provide for a single craft. We also research and develop new methods, develop new tools, and study chair design.” The tools alone are a mark of his total influence on the craft.

The “we” Mike refers to includes his talented wife Sue Dunbar. While he is the craftsman, the teacher, and the face of The Windsor Institute, Sue is the Institute’s visionary. She hatched the plan and headed up the construction of the school. She now handles much of the administrative work, using her abilities to keep the Institute running smoothly. While most of the work she
One of the most popular items of large furniture today is the freestanding island. These can vary from simple rolling butcher block topped carts to elaborate work and serving centers containing sinks, cook tops, and areas to lay out buffet items. The precedent seems to be the centrally located work tables in large historic kitchens. With the modern kitchen becoming a social center, islands have evolved into central showpieces.

Last year I was approached by the owners of a beautiful home in southeast New Hampshire to build a large island. They had put a lot of thought into the location, function, and overall look they wanted. In their home, there is a large open space at the crossroads, as it were, of a large kitchen opposite a sunken living room on one axis, and on the other axis a formal dining room opposite an informal dining room with many windows. The proposed island was, therefore, to be the focal point of the public area of the home and thus had to be visually striking and beautiful and also harmonize with the existing furnishings, floor and wall treatments. The surface was to be used for entertaining purposes such as buffets and wine tastings. In addition it was to provide ample storage for table linens and settings, bowls and small appliances.

The clients had assembled a helpful set of magazine clippings and commercial designs. Two of their most interesting requirements were that the island have turned legs and that the finish of the body be distressed black, contrasting with stained top and legs.

Intrigued by the project, I consulted many Guild members for advice. These conversations helped me get clear that I wanted to build something the clients would be extremely happy with, that would be fun and challenging to build, and that would have a shot at lasting for 200 years. Dave Anderson has a saying that of the choice of speed, quality, and cost, one gets to choose two. The compromise was speed; I estimated that the project would take nine months. The quality would be the best I am capable of and the cost more than competitive with other quotes they had received. This was quite acceptable to them and so we proceeded.

The finished island, in its new home, is shown in the accompanying photograph. The clients report that they are absolutely thrilled with it. I had enormous fun building it. The elapsed time between signing the contract and delivery was eight months. In the remainder of this article, I report on some selected interesting aspects of design, execution and client relations aspects. There was also a completely unexpected benefit – mentioned at the end of the article.

**Design**

Looking in magazines, showrooms, and on the web, the thing that most bothered me about island designs with legs is that they did not make good woodworking sense and seemed confused as to whether they were decorative or functional. Usually the legs attached directly to the top and reached the floor, with a unit of drawers and cabinets inside. The effect is rather like building a table consisting of just a top and legs (without a skirt or frame for solid attachment of the legs) and placing it over a chest of drawers. I calculated that the four foot wide top would expand and contract almost an inch over the seasons and so if the legs were directly attached to the top they would be dragged across the floor. Perhaps the commercial units use veneered particleboard tops but this island was to be made entirely of solid wood.

My design solution has hints of Empire style based on something we saw on the Period Furniture field trip to historic Deerfield last summer. The island is built as a solid framework of 1" x 2" members (1" x 6" for the
base) with the legs as unambiguously decorative columns inset into the corners.

Another interesting design challenge was fitting the maximum possible storage capacity into the unit. The finished piece has ten drawers, eight slide-out trays, and four secret compartments. The photograph shows the internal framework of the unit. This hangs off the basic skeleton mentioned above and supports the complex array of drawers and trays.

Before building I spent almost 100 hours drawing up the plans. This paid off down the road in a major way since everything fit together as intended with no surprises and no rework.

**Implementation**

An interesting client requirement was that the openings for the drawer and cabinets all be surrounded by beading. A fellow Guild member, Eric Feldborg, showed me how to do this the right way. The result can be seen in the detail photo [page 12]. The beads are routed directly into the 1 “ x 2” members of which the frame is constructed. To get the corners to fit together, I made mortise and tenon joints with shoulders at 45° angles. Thus the beads are part of the solid framework — they are not tacked on separately. The tricky part of this operation was aligning the tools precisely and building jigs to get the corners to come out perfectly, like the corners of picture frames. But once I got the settings right for the first one, the remaining 35 all came out well.

The mortise and tenon construction gave the framework enormous stability even before gluing. Indeed, gluing the frame was one of the last things I did. It was a great help to be able to assemble the frame for accurate fittings of the internals, drawer slides, and so forth, and then disassemble it again to cut hinge mortises, slide mortises, and support pieces.

The clients were anxious to have smoothly operating drawers and were not satisfied with the operation of their wood-runner drawers on some of their other high-end furniture. So we needed to use drawer slides. On researching these, again with advice from fellow Guild members, I hit upon Blum Tandem slides. These are high end (about $50 per pair), full extension slides that mount under the drawers and thus are not visible from the sides. Pondering the precise though terse engineering diagrams that come with these, it seemed that they are mostly intended for drawers with surface mount drawer fronts, whereas I wanted flush mount fronts. This required modifying the standard installation procedures as shown in the detail slide mount photograph below. The mount is recessed into shallow mortises on the frame side and bottom. This extra step allowed the drawer front to fit precisely into the frame with a 3/32” gap all around, and to be perfectly flush with the frame face.

The detail photograph is from the prototype drawer I built so as to be sure that everything would fit perfectly and that I understood the complexities of slide mounts. The prototype is now a rather high-end drawer under my workbench and holds drafting equipment and supplies.

**Finish**

The detail photo [page 12] also gives a good impression of the finish. After much experimentation, we settled on a black milk paint finish, distressed, and over coated with lacquer. My wife, Holly, was in charge of the artistic aspects of the distressing. She visited salvage yards to study weathering and cracking of old paint as well as patterns of wear on old furniture. She then developed her own methods including, for example, using an ultra-thin Japanese saw to simulate cracks at the ends of a board. Before applying the milk paint, we stained the wood so that the stain color would show through the areas where the paint was distressed away.

The finish on the top had to be alcohol resistant. This eliminated shellac and lacquer. Bob LaCivita recommended equal parts linseed oil, turpentine, and varnish applied in many thin coats with a cloth. After wiping on each coat, I make a sort of squeegee by wrapping a cloth flat and tight around a long stick and wiping it across the wet finish, much as one would squeegee a window.

Photos by John Whiteside

This prototype drawer slide installation now resides under my shop workbench.
The result is quite successful as you can see in the photos.

Client Relations

I was fortunate to have great clients who had a clear idea of what they wanted, who took an interest in the project as it unfolded, and were fun to work with. I was welcome to visit their home as needed and they were enthusiastic to visit the shop as the island took shape. For virtually every aspect of the project, I made samples or built prototypes. Thus they could see, give feedback on, and approve features as work progressed. When it was time to build or finish parts for real, I had the confidence of having built a prototype that worked and that the clients liked.

For example, before turning the legs I made a one third scale model leg. To get the distressing and finish right, we prototyped many techniques and samples before everyone was satisfied. Given the client’s concerns about smoothly operating drawers, it was great to have them operate and approve the prototype drawer before ordering $1000 worth of drawer slides.

Some of the best times were when the clients brought their kids over to the shop. The kids seemed so interested that after the first visit the idea came to me to include some secret compartments for them in the design. I won’t say where they are, but the kids know and each has their own.

One fascinating insight from this project was learning to think about, not just a piece of furniture per se, but thinking about a piece of furniture designed to fit into a particular context, that is, a particular physical space, a particular decor, for a particular family with particular needs and desires.

Getting to see a bit about how their household worked let me do a much better job. For example, we measured the bowls and appliances to determine the slide-out tray heights (some trays are shown in the final photograph). Put another way, this piece was designed for and depends on its unique setting. That for me is one of the joys of truly custom-built furniture, yet this perspective seems not much emphasized in woodworking books. For some reason our culture focusses on individual pieces, not pieces in their settings.

Unexpected Benefit

When one takes on a large, challenging project, sometime the universe grants one an unexpected gift. A friend of mine casually stopped by to visit the shop, saw the project, became intrigued, and spent the day watching me. At the end of the day I asked him if he had enjoyed himself. He said, “Yes, but when I come back next time, you’d better have something for me to do!” He ended up working hard over many weeks helping, for the sheer fun and experience of it. Later, I heard Dave Anderson and Paul Miller discussing

how great it would be to have a worthy apprentice. “My goodness”, I thought, “That’s what Franz is!” Franz Summers is a quick study, naturally talented at woodworking, anxious to learn, and has experience as a machinist. This latter was especially helpful when we had to modify the metal slides, for example. Franz helped with many aspects of the project and claims to have thoroughly enjoyed himself. He now understands, for example, the difference between a sanded versus a hand-planed and cabinet-scraped table top. Though a little older than I, he is more flexible, as can be seen from the photo of him working inside the frame. I brought him to a Guild meeting and he joined on the spot.

Before applying finish to the bottom of the massive, 2” thick island top, all of us, (me, my wife Holly, and Franz) signed the piece. No fancy brands or logos for us; we used the method of the old time furniture makers — pencil with a layer of shellac to protect it.

Conclusion

Jim Blauvelt, the expert in Japanese furnituremaking mentioned in my previous article (The Zen of Woodworking, Old Saw, Feb., 2006), had happened to mention the idea of a signature piece. This is one that is an exciting challenge, the most ambitious one has even done, the one that uses every tool in the shop, and the one that represents the very best one is capable of. He mused that he had not yet built his signature piece. Well, I have, with a little help from my friends, and this is it.
This is one big table! It is a study in extremes—a physical challenge in handling the materials and a physical and mental challenge in its decorative details by way of taking 4½ months to build and carve.

This table is remarkable to me on several levels. First, of course, is the size—13’ long, 42” wide. The plank top alone took four men to carry it out of the shop. Each trestle end weighed over 100 pounds before carving started. The second is that every inch of this piece was surfaced by hand—the top and all the carved surfaces. The third was developing the design of such a complicated and involved piece from a tiny photo of an antique.

Fortunately, I had a highly respected partner in this job. Mark Adams of Lempster, NH is a consummate craftsman with an extensive background in conservation work and architectural finishing. We have worked closely together on several jobs. In fact this table is for his client. I’m doing the woodwork; he will age and finish the piece. Together we developed the design from small digital images.

Beyond the wood procurement, European walnut, and logistics of handling the sizeable material, the two largest parts of the job, for me, was the design development and the carving.

**Design Challenges**—Mark loves his Apple computer and its graphic capabilities. With a few images made available to him, he was able to provide full size photographs to work from. A reasonably accurate “square end view” was developed by twisting and tweaking angled shots. This was done for the trestle end and the four foot central section of the stretcher.

From the two photographs I then refined the lines to correct distortion, ensured the proportions were right for the size of the table we were to produce and develop all the patterns for the intricate carvings. Upon request, Mark would develop specific images for me by zooming in on unclear details and from there we could determine the correct approach.

A major change in the overall design of this table was making a 10’ table into a 13’ table. The biggest challenge was to redesign the stretcher to accommodate the extra length and have it look like it was always meant to be that way. On either side of the central medallion are acanthus leaves that are draped over the top edge. The overall design was stretched and the acanthus leafage was continued in the same fashion so as to appear seamless.

**Clay Prototype**—All these corrections were done on paper. I was then introduced to a process Mark uses extensively in his conservator/restoration work. Mark suggested modeling a prototype in clay before committing to the walnut. In conservation work, when a detail in a carving is missing, a clay sculpture is often done to determine what the missing part should look like. The beauty of clay is that you can change your mind about the form very quickly, and change it back again, unlike carving wood. The entire trestle end was sculpted in clay to a full size model. The same process was done for the stretcher, all 9½ feet of it!

In addition to being a visual guide, the clay models double as templates. When baked, the clay becomes hard and durable for template use. My models needed to be made in sections small enough to fit into...
a commercial oven I had at my disposal. These sections then could be screwed together and mounted on a piece of plywood for stability. Each section had a substrate of MDF that the clay was applied to. The background layer was \( \frac{3}{8} - \frac{3}{16} \) thick. I would next roll out more clay and using my various patterns, cut out the leaves, vines, feathers or whatever element needed to be modeled. This relief was quite deep in places. At the scrolls of the shield pattern, the clay and set back was a full \( \frac{3}{4} \) deep.

**An Articulating Machine** – Before even thinking about woodwork, Mark and I would meet and discuss the model. Several meetings and several adjustments needed to be made before the model was called done. There were still two details to be resolved, a female figure and a standing lion.

This walnut is very hard, much harder than American walnut. The thought of wasting away \( \frac{3}{4} \) of this material became rather daunting. I began researching the idea of using a copy router for this rough work and finishing off by hand. A router made sense because there are so many contours as well as repetitive features. I've used hand routers many times for doing simple ground work, but this project required more. This was more than just relief carving. Many aspects, especially the griffin's face, breast and feet are three dimensional in nature.

An articulating machine that could follow all these contours seemed to be the answer. Using one of these machines is akin to using a table saw or planer. The machine doesn't give the final surface, it just helps you get there.

I scoured all my catalogs – nothing. Sure there were similar machines but for doing small-scale work. I needed to handle stock 3' wide and 9\( \frac{1}{2} \) long. I went to the Internet – bingo and tens of thousands of dollars too. Ultimately the machines are worth their cost, but not if you're doing just one piece. I then happened upon a website a guy in Michigan has for making decoys. He encountered the same type of sticker shock I was going through, so he made his own.

He made his machine from plywood and standard hardware. Decoys are much smaller than trestle tables, but this seemed like a possibility. After reading the description and a few phone calls to him I said lets do it. The design could be easily expanded to meet my needs. I ordered the online available plans, re-engineered it and built my machine – 16' long x 4' wide. This was big. It filled my bench room quite nicely. All the lumber filled my machine room. I had two boles of walnut for this project – a lot of wood.

The design of the machine needed to accommodate both stock and pattern. The two 12' x 9\( \frac{1}{2} \)' stretcher pieces would fit inside all right. The trestle parts needed to be handled differently. The stock was placed inside the machine. The tracer arm needed to be extended to reach across everything. Now my set-up was 16' long x 7' wide.

As you can see by the photos, the router and tracer stylus are parallel and set the same depth. The machine pivots, swings and rolls to be able to work in three dimensions and the router will cut wood wherever the stylus tells it to go. Even though this process saved huge amounts of time, the work was difficult and exhausting. The entire rig is balanced to reduce fatigue, but standing at this with eye and ear protection, a screaming router and loads of shavings for 10-12 hours a day is tiresome. I went over each face twice. The first roughing pass was done with a 1/2” bit. The second with a 1/4” bit. To get some degree of detail, the smaller bit was advanced 1/8” at a time along the length of the piece. The 9\( \frac{1}{2} \)' stretcher took a few passes. At the \( \frac{1}{8} \) rate, each side took 912 passes!

I understood that with each reduction in bit diameter I could get more detail, but it was quickly determined to clean up the machine and get out the hand tools. Gouges, chisels and mallets were in charge now.

The machine did admirably well. I'm convinced it saved me valuable time. The image it left on the stock is similar to a computer image that isn't quite there – rather "pixilated". But with squinting you could make it out. The real beauty of this process is that the gouges “only” need to clean up the surfaces but not remove a lot of material to achieve proper depth. That's been done. The handwork was still incredibly demanding.
Despite standing at my bench for months working on the same project, I found each day interesting and satisfying. Never was I bored by it. Certainly challenged, yes. Every surface was carved, scraped or hand planed. After all, in its day this was how it was done – less the machine.

As I write this in late April, the table is in Mark’s shop in Lempster getting aged 350 years to a warm, rich, hand worn patina. We will both boldly sign this piece. It will then reside in a western mountaintop lodge.

A Frame of Mind – This is a new piece in an old style. It is not a fake. It is understanding a pattern language from another time and satisfying a patrons’ wishes – just like what has been done for centuries.

One very important factor to keep in mind during any project of historical precedent is to think like “they” would. In other words, old things look that way for two reasons. One is time and its effects on color, the wear and tear, and degradation of the integrity of the material. The other is the process used when the design was first made. Mark’s task involves the effects of time on a piece – color changes, wood movement, and the myriad stories the piece has to tell from 350 years of existence. My job was to create a piece, that when complete, appears the way it would have if done 350 years ago. How I got there was my choice. What you actually see is what the table is in Mark’s shop in a western mountaintop lodge.

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A glue-up that gets away from you is nerve wracking and can put hours of careful work at risk. Often the solution comes from a simple trick. Many of these methods were passed on to me as advice from fellow woodworkers when I faced a particular problem. Others, I picked up and just tucked away, waiting for a situation that would bring it to mind. These are my favorite tricks for unusual clamping problems. I don't use them all that often, but in the right place each can give an extra measure of control.

I enjoy collecting odd bits of woodworking information the way some people like to collect tools. These tricks of the trade are part of the accumulated wisdom of the craft. The ideas that were successful are saved and passed along. And like a specialized tool, in the right circumstances, these methods can give you a way out of a nasty situation.

When Regular Clamps Won't Do

**Clamping Ears** – One of the most direct strategies is to leave clamping “ears”, which can be planned at the drafting stage and become part of your pattern. The idea is to give a temporary purchase for a clamp, sawing away the extra wood after the glue up. The clamping flat should be in line and parallel to the joint to be closed.

Sometimes this isn't possible. Nesting multiple curved pieces from a blank may not leave waste areas big enough for clamping ears. Repair work presents similar problems with curved parts. In this case, add an “ear” by scribing scrap blocks of soft wood with notches cut for the clamp heads.

For turned parts, a clamping block can be made by drilling a hole in scrap with a forstner bit and then sawing out the part you need. When you clamp the fitted block to the work piece, put some sandpaper (which should be folded in thirds like a letter) between the two parts to keep them from slipping under pressure.

A related method is to use wooden handscrews to give clamping surfaces. The folded sandpaper trick works here as well.

**Bag of Sand** – A “squash to fit” caul is a canvas bag of sand. This is a great way to veneer narrow concave surfaces. If you are using hot hide glue, the sand bags can be warmed in the oven to give more working time. This warmth, along with dampening the canvas can help ease the veneer down into the curved surface. The old-timer I learned this from said they used old canvas fire hoses to veneer long pieces of crown molding.
**Ears on a Cover Board** – Another variation is to glue 45° ears to a cover board, which is then clamped to the work. The project in the photo is mitered with blind multiple splines. Even if the joint fits nicely when dry, it requires a great deal of pressure to drive excess glue from all the mating surfaces. The scrap ¼˝ plywood is cut a bit shorter than the rails to be clamped, so that you can inspect the miter. The 45° blocks are glued on so that the clamping pressure is directly across the miter. I also needed to bridge the small moldings. Unlike a band clamp, this method lets you adjust the force on each corner.

This method also works where you don’t have a four-sided assembly, such as a mitered bracket foot. In this case, instead of clamping the cover board on, I add a cleat to the back of the cover to grab the end of the pieces. This keeps the cover board from sliding forward as you apply pressure.

**Clamping Forms** – Appliqué carvings offer their own challenges. Sturdy items like scallop shells can be clamped with soft wood blocks, padded with scrap leather. With thinner or more delicate carvings, you run the risk of dents or cracks. In these cases I make up a clamping form with non-hardening modeling clay.

Cover the carving with plastic wrap and press small balls of clay (warmed in your hands) into the carving until the entire area is covered and built up to a flat surface. Chilling this form in the refrigerator will make it stiffer. Then it can be covered with a piece of plywood and used to clamp the carving down. I find that the clay slowly squeezes down, so retighten the clamps every few minutes. This method gives very even pressure without damage to fragile areas.

I use nipped brads to locate appliqués and to keep them from sliding around on the glue. Tap fine brads into several background areas, and then cut them off with wire cutters to leave short gripping points. Before spreading the glue, the carving is pushed down on the brads, making locating dents on the back. The clay can be reused many times. This is also a good way to make a cradle to hold odd shaped parts while you work on them.
**Upholstery Springs** – Old upholstery springs can be cut up and bent to clamp odd shaped parts. They can be especially useful in repair work to clamp cracked or snapped off pieces. The spring tips can be sharp or round, as the situation warrants. Sometimes I use a blob of hot-melt glue to protect an area and have a gripping surface for the spring. This can look pretty “mickey mouse”, but together, several springs put out a surprising amount of pressure. The direction of the clamping pressure is easy to adjust and they don’t require the prep time of scribed clamping “ears”.

**Go-Bars** – One of my favorite clamping tricks is the “go-bar”. I learned this from piano re-builders, who use them to glue pin blocks to soundboards. In the simplest version, it’s just a springy stick, but some people use fiberglass rods with rubber tips. Piano shops have dedicated “go-bar cages”, with a flat work surface and a sturdily attached ceiling of soft wood. The go-bars can have the top end sharpened to grip the ceiling and push at an angle if needed.

I usually use the shelf under my bench, but I have also positioned work under a beam in my shop and clamped from it. You can adjust the pressure by changing the length and thickness of the bars. Pressure can be applied very gently and gradually and it is quick and easy to adjust the location and direction of the force.

Go-bars also give you a way to clamp things out of the reach of ordinary clamps, like an inlay in the middle of a large table.

**Shaped Cauls** – Clamping moldings can be difficult because of their curved surfaces. A shaped caul can distribute the pressure evenly. I scribe the molding on the end of a soft wood strip, leaving some wood hooked over the top edge. Then create the negative space with table saw cuts. These don’t need to fit perfectly; you just need some pressure points across the width of the molding.
Have you tried shellac yet? Don’t put it off any longer. Shellac is without a doubt the best finish out there. Here are some shellac facts.

1. Shellac makes wood beautiful. It has the smallest of molecules in comparison to other finishing materials. It saturates deep into the wood fibers and encapsulates them so they sparkle. Other finish materials sit on the surface and may distract the eye of the beholder from the beauty of the wood below — wood that you have painstakingly chosen and perhaps embellished with marquetry or inlay. Try this experiment — apply shellac, urethane, and lacquer to a sample piece of mahogany and let it dry. Examine the samples with a magnifying glass. You will see the difference. The shellac will shimmer in the pores and reflect more light back at you.

2. It is non-toxic and has no offensive odor. Shellac is used in the food, pharmaceutical, and cosmetic industries.

3. It is readily available. Every paint store as well as the major do-it-yourself retailers sells shellac. Zinsser is the only company that sells shellac through retail outlets. Be sure to check the bottom of can for the manufacture or expiration date. You can even get shellac in an aerosol can!

4. It is easy to use. All you need is a quart of denatured alcohol, the shellac, and a fine bristle brush — either natural bristle or synthetic. Reduce the shellac from the can with two parts shellac to five parts alcohol and you’re ready to go. Shellac dries quickly so don’t go back and try to re-brush covered surfaces. If you miss a spot, catch it on your next coat. It is best to flow shellac on. You can sand and re-coat in an hour if the air is warm and dry. If not, you can test the shellac with sand paper. It is ok to re-coat when the sanding produces a powder.

5. It is readily reversible. Alcohol solves all problems with shellac. If you don’t like your first attempts, simply remove the offending coats with alcohol and start over.

6. It is readily re-coatable. If your shellac finish eventually gets some scratches or scuff marks, simply clean the surface, sand lightly with 320 grit paper and re-coat it. I do this to shellac finishes that are over 150 years old.

7. Shellac is a durable and hard finish. It was used for floors before brushing lacquers like Fabulon came along. Over time lacquer will crack and urethane will chip but not shellac. Shellac can expand and contract indefinitely without cracking.

8. Shellac will stick tenaciously to anything, even Teflon. Got a contaminated surface — maybe with wax? Shellac will seal it off and dry just fine. In my trade, we even use it to seal off silicone contamination.

9. Cleanup is easy. Squeeze the excess shellac from the bristles of your brush, shape and let them dry. When you need your brush again, put it in some alcohol and it will re-soften.

There is a lot more to the shellac story; its origins, uses and application techniques, but that will have to wait for future articles. The important point for now is to get you to try it. When you have more familiarity with the product, then the knowledge of the “rest of the story” will be all the more captivating.
I started working with wood six years ago with basically one tool – a rotary power carver. I was hooked immediately. It wasn’t long before I reached the limits of the rotary tool and began using the equipment in my husband’s hobby shop. I’ve been able to flesh out the shop somewhat since then but it still has serious limitations. I’ve learned to become both creative and resourceful in using the equipment at hand.

I began establishing a woodworking business about three years ago. Most of my work so far has been commissioned custom pieces. I enjoy that type of work immensely, but this year, I realized that I needed to strengthen my business with a “bread and butter” component. My goal for this year is to develop some simple product lines that are readily reproducible within the limitations of my shop. For creativity’s sake (and for my own peace of mind) I also included a customizable element in the designs.

I’ve enjoyed making custom chests of various designs for a range of uses so I began exploring in this direction. I decided on some heirloom-quality children’s chests based on a versatile design that with some slight variations could be used for both toy chests and hope chests. Front panels in the chest boxes would contain the customizable element which I would create using simple intarsia inlay.

**Design Strategy** – I sketched out two slightly varied chest designs. In both cases the basic dimensions, the joinery, and the construction process would be very similar. The chest fronts would contain panels providing the area to be used for the customizable inlay designs. For these inlaid areas I created full size sketches, one based on a shell motif and the other a simple rainbow scene.

The Shell chest would be constructed of solid straight-grain maple and the inlay would use curly maple, straight-grain maple and aspen. These woods would provide subtle contrasts through varying grain patterns and natural tones. The Rainbow chest would be constructed of solid red oak and the inlay would be made from aspen treated with deep-penetrating toymakers dyes to add vivid color.

To begin, from the inlay sketches I traced my cutting patterns onto drafting vellum and then applied them to the wood with rubber cement. Some of the more exacting cuts were made with a scroll saw, but for the most part a band saw was used. The cutout process for the Rainbow chest inlay was very simple. All the pieces for a given panel section were cut as a group from a single layer of 5/16˝ aspen.

The cutout process for the Shell chest inlay was a bit more complex because three different woods were used. Where two different woods adjoined, I made that adjoining cut by stacking the two woods and cutting them simultaneously to insure a tight fit. In one small section, I needed to stack-saw with a bevel cut to get a good fit. I’ll avoid this next time by making a slight change in the inlay design but for the most part the cutout was very straightforward. There are many different ways to approach cutting and fitting pieces for inlay, but these seem to work the best for me. And if all else fails, I can always use the rotary carver to fine-tune a fit.

I moved on to the shaping process once the inlay pieces were cut and fitted. A defining characteristic for modern intarsia inlay is the three dimensional appearance that can be achieved by shaping and shimming individual pieces. To simplify the inlay process for both chests, I used no shimming but did shape each piece to add perspective and dimension. I used the rotary power carver with various bits to shape and sculpt the intarsia pieces.

With shaping completed, I mixed dyes for the rainbow colors. I first tested the palette of colors I wanted to use on aspen scraps. My dyes were water-based so they would raise the grain in the aspen...
once applied, making the surface rough and difficult to finish. To eliminate that problem, I pre-raised the grain before applying the dye by moistening the finish-sanded aspen pieces with water, letting them dry overnight and sanding down the raised grain. I applied the dye to each piece individually and let them dry. Finally, urethane oil was brushed on to seal the dyes.

**Joinery** – To use my time more productively, I worked on the intarsia inlay in a separate area of the shop during chest construction glue-up periods. As I mentioned before, the joinery for the chests was to be very basic. Doweled edge joinery was used for constructing the chest sides, backs and lids. In the design I had created a slightly recessed chest front to provide additional protection for the inlaid panels. The front and back of each chest would be joined to the inside surface of the chest sides with a reinforced butt joint. To prepare for that, the chest sides
were pre-drilled for wood screws with a tapered countersinking drill bit. Once the chests were assembled, tapered end-grain plugs would fill the remainder of the countersunk holes.

The chest fronts were constructed like face frames also using dowels. Once constructed, a rabbet was cut into the back sides of the panel openings in the chest face frames. The inlay panels were laid into the rabbets from the back, then screwed and glued into place. This process for applying the inlay panels would allow me to construct chest boxes in advance and then later insert customized inlay panels based on the design requested by the customer.

**Assembly & Finish** – With the chest boxes ready for assembly, I next cut the plywood background panels to size, positioned them into the face frames and applied the inlay pieces to them. With the rainbow chest, an additional walnut border was added around the inlay pieces to increase the sense of depth and contrast. All the pieces were then glued and clamped into position.

Next, the chest boxes were assembled with inlay panels intact. Previously constructed lid blanks were cut to an exact fit and attached to the chest boxes. The chests received several coats of hard drying urethane oil with sanding between coats.

Since these were children’s chests, safety features had to be part of the design. The wood dyes and finishing oil used are nontoxic. Handle holes were cut into the chest sides for added ventilation. Additional support was added to the chest bottoms. Strong cabinet hinges and lid supports were used on the lids. All sharp edges and corners were broken or rounded.

My hope in developing this “bread and butter” line is that it will facilitate what I really love to do; explore new designs, techniques and materials, and craft new custom pieces.
Up with Dragons!

Here is a new rasp which is better than the Nicholsons. A friend of mine who works at Colonial Williamsburg put me on to the Dragon Rasps. I have used the Nicholsons for years and they were my favorites, but you can have them now that I have my Dragons!

The Dragons taper regularly to a fine point, and are much wider at their base. This permits both finer work and faster stock removal. I also feel that they cut cleaner as well. I haven’t used the French Auriou (www.highlandhardware.com) so I can’t compare, and those Auriou come in a greater variety of shapes, but the Dragons are definitely a better bargain.

The Dragons come in two lengths (10˝ and 6˝) two cuts, and two profiles. I found mine at the amazing instrument makers catalog Stewart-MacDonald (www.stewmac.com) which is worth a lengthy perusal!

Meet My New Apprentice!

You’ll all be very envious to learn that I have a new apprentice – his name is Lead as in Lead Shot. He holds things for hours or weeks. He is a bit dense, but conforms well, doesn’t cost me much and is so handy I thought I had to tell you all about him.

You’ll have to go to the gun shop to find this “tool” but it is really worth it. I bought shot originally to weight down a lathe with a dancing problem but have since found so many uses it amazes me.

Just today, I put a 25 lb. bag on top of a chair rail to hold together a broken joint I was gluing together. For the last few days, several bags have been helping to hold a table top flat. Before that they held the top in place while I routed the edge. Before that they held a small piece while I planed it. And before that they were slung over the base of my scroll saw which also vibrates too much.

If you buy a few 25 lb bags of fine shot (Birdshot … #9) you will be delighted with the ways you will use them. It sounds too good to be true, but the massive and conformable weight lends itself to a thousand uses – every shop I know could use an apprentice with this sort of patience!
Totally Turning 2005
Hosted by Adirondack Woodturners Association

Each of the past two years, I have attended the Totally Turning Woodturning Symposium at the Empire State Plaza Convention Center in Albany, NY – www.totallyturning.com. The symposium is hosted by the Adirondack Woodturners Association which is a local chapter of the American Association of Woodturners (AAW) and a special interest group of The Northeastern Woodworkers Association – www.woodworker.org. Last year the symposium was held on Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 15th & 16th, 2005.

The format of the symposium is typical of the AAW with woodturning demonstrations, an Instant Gallery and a vendor area. The Instant Gallery and vendor areas are open to the public. There was also an assortment of door prizes for those submitting items for the Instant Gallery and a raffle. Lunch was also available, which I recommend, both for the quality of the lunch (catered by Subway) and the time saved by not leaving the convention center.

There are four sessions each of the two days and six choices for each session for a total of 48 demonstrations. Even so, as with our own symposiums, it is difficult to make your choices.

These are the sessions I attended with a few comments:

Stuart Batty – Very Tall Thin Goblets
– Stuart Batty is the main reason I wanted to go to the symposium and he did not disappoint. He is very talented, very accomplished and an excellent presenter.

He used a bowl gouge to cut the thin stem, basically resting the edge of the gouge gently on the stem and using it like a skew chisel, incrementally moving in small sections back toward the headstock. He used masking tape on the tailstock and the inside of the bowl to steady the goblet without disturbing the finished inside.

He has come up with a technique he calls “negative rake scraping” that he claims is superior. He grinds the top of the scraper down at a pretty severe angle to create the negative rake when the tool is presented more or less horizontally. I first learned of this last year from Bonnie Klein who credited Stuart for the technique. We had a discussion at the time as to why it is any different from holding the scraper at a different angle. I am still not totally convinced but they both insist that it makes a big difference, so I will defer to their superior knowledge until I can try it. He had some tools for sale and said that he will soon be selling the tools publicly.

Stuart Batty – Off-Center Square Bowls
– This technique is definitely not for the faint of heart as those off-center square corners could definitely do a job on your fingers. He bandsaws off much of the waste to get rid of as much mass as possible before turning off-center. He puts a light behind the bowl to help see the square corners and uses a very pointed bowl gouge to get into the tight places. He uses his negative rake scraper with a burr to scrape the bowl.

Bob Post – Inside Out Turnings
– Bob is one of the local turners that I thought was doing interesting work. For most of his work he holds four square pieces of wood in jam chucks held between centers and turns what will be the inside of the turning. He then rotates the four pieces, glues them together and does the outside turning.

For the flower he holds the four pieces in a chuck and turns a bullet shape on one end, rotates the pieces, glues them up and then turns the outside shape, the inside of the bottom and the inside of the petals.

Andi Wolfe – Surface Enhancements
– Although each of her sessions had the same title, she apparently showed different techniques for each. The session I attended was about woodburning. She traces her leaf patterns with a very soft pencil so the wood will not be scratched. She recommends the relatively new Burn Master woodburner as being about half the price of the Detail Master which was the previous favorite. She uses a fan to blow away the fumes from the burning resins and uses 91% isopropyl alcohol to clean off the work after burning.

Linda Salter – Segmented Turning for Beginners
– Linda provides a very detailed set of procedures for making segmented bowls. Very worthwhile if you are planning on making these.

Nick Cook – Plates and Platters
– Nick presented a basic session on making platters that was worth attending. When he uses a vacuum chuck he makes a custom size with a lip to surround the outside of the rough blank for safety (so the blank cannot slip out sideways to the lathe axis). He often uses ash for his platters and burns the rim with propane gas. He then abrades the rim with a 3M maroon pad, wire brushes with the grain and uses a brass brush across the grain. He then finishes with flat or satin Deft lacquer.

I want to thank the Guild for the scholarship grant which helped me attend the symposium this year.
March 18th, 2006

Small Meetings – Big Day

Making a Spoke Shave
Dave Anderson at The Homestead School in Newmarket, NH

Alan Mitchell was again generous enough to open the doors of the Homestead School to our Guild. Inside, Dave Anderson led twelve of us through the process of making a wooden spokeshave. We each arrived with the common hand tools he suggested we bring, and a hardwood blank prepared to the specific dimensions of 11” x 1½” x ¾”. Walnut was a popular choice. Others brought purple heart, maple, and cherry. Dave supplied us each with the Veritas Wooden Spokeshave Kit that included all the additional parts we would need. He then began to demonstrate each step of the process as given in the kit’s instructions, adding in pieces of wisdom he’d gained from his past experiences with the project. He provided helpful examples of the finished product, and a few jigs and fixtures that kept things moving.

Some of us left with some homework, but I think we all had a good time. It was nice to work alongside some of the other guys in the Guild, check out each other’s tools, and share some technique.

The kits we used are available at www.leevalley.com. The instructions are thorough and can be carried out with simple hand tools, though a drill press is recommended and a band saw would be helpful – Caleb Dietrich.

Production Jointery with a Router Table
Dave Emerson in Canterbury, NH

The meeting topic was production joinery with a router table. This was a run of three coffee tables and six half rounds determined by how much material I could work up from my random quality local cherry, using somewhat quarter sawn for aprons and fairly worm-hole free for the legs. All stock has been roughed and set around as long as possible to make sure it’ll behave. I make pattern pieces before the run and do plenty of layout marks on the work to prevent screwing up the orientation for cutting mortises, tenons and leg tapers. I dry fit before final sanding. All machining is done before sanding. Tenons occasionally need a little fine tuning with 80 grit paper. Since I cleared the shop of other work and just did tables, I stayed focused and didn’t forget to plow the grooves for the oak buttons I use to hold the tops on!

Most satisfying to be able to do tables and to be able to share with guild members. I’ll be demonstrating on almost all Sunday afternoons in season, and hope to see more members – Dave Emerson.

Making Carved Molding
Bob LaCivita in Nottingham, NH

Nine people gathered at Bob LaCivita’s shop in Nottingham for a demonstration on how to carve peas & sausages and eggs & darts. These elements are usually carved on the edge or border of a piece of furniture to add a touch of interest. During the demonstration, Bob suggested carving tools for the beginner – what tools to get and what to avoid. Sets come with tools that may not be used until later. Get tools when you need them. Bob suggested that the larger tools are more useful at first.

He also touched on the laying out and spacing of the elements. This takes some thought so that the pattern comes out even from one to the other or the pattern comes out right going into and out of a corner. If thought out and laid out with pattern in mind, the flow won’t be broken. Bob also demonstrated how to lay out and carve a “rope”.

Each of us watched how Bob carved and laid out his work and gained a little more confidence in adding a carved element to a future project. Thanks Bob – Charlie Matteson.

Staining and Coloring Wood
Bruce Hamilton in West Newbury, MA

The topic for Bruce’s meeting was coloring wood with dyes and stains. His presentation covered that topic and more with extraordinary depth. He spoke about the pros and cons of most of the commercially available products on the market. The application techniques were demonstrated with emphasis on safe usage and consistent repeatable results. He described how to combine pigment and dye based stains for effect and how to use various types of grain fillers in the coloring process. Shellac was covered in depth because it has so many uses in the wood finishing process.

Another topic was how to set up a finishing room, product storage, waste disposal and ventilation. He spoke about the effects of various types of lighting both at the time of finishing and in the final location of the piece.

Bruce is an excellent teacher backed by many years of practical experience in his successful furniture finishing and restoration business. I would like to thank him for giving up that Saturday to share his expertise with the guild members who attended – Greg Benulis.

Entertainment Centers
Brooks Tanner in Manchester, NH

My good friend John Frick and I were fortunate to have free time on Saturday morning to travel down to Manchester for Brooks Tanner’s small meeting. Brooks’ shop is spacious and well-equipped, and his dog “Gopher” rounds out all the must-haves for a good work place.

A brief description of all the current major components available to today’s audio and video consumer led into basic and advanced concerns of room tuning and how it affects both sound and video. The pros’ and cons’ of material selection, concerns for heat, wiring and vibration were presented as design criteria for complex entertainment centers. I was pleased to learn that my old stand-by, veneer core birch, was a major player in cabinet construction. – Tom Dalton.
Saturday, May 13th was an amazing day in all regards. The record rainfalls did not in any way dampen the spirit and excitement that we all felt being amongst over 400 woodturners (375 registered plus ~100 from the general public) at Pinkerton Academy for the 5th New England Woodturning Symposium. The place was buzzing with activity, and the only complaint I heard all day was that the choices were too hard to make.

And choices there were! We had 28 demonstrations divided into four time blocks. Topics ranged from basic surveys for beginners, to highly advanced explorations of technique, aesthetics and practices. Some rooms were full to overflowing, but there were always three or four rooms with extra space, so that any attendee never felt they couldn't see something useful.

Competing for the attentions of the attendees were the Instant Gallery and the Trade Show. The tables in the Gallery were full of exciting objects, and the variety was stunning. An unscientific comparison to Instant Galleries from past symposia shows how quickly people are advancing in their skills and creativity.

The Trade Show has grown to the point that every available square foot of the available space was taken! Tools, machines, videos, and especially stacks and stacks of amazing pieces of wood filled the room and dazzled the eye. A lot of woodturners now have some new toys to play with in the coming weeks.

In addition we raised enough money through the raffle to purchase four complete lathe setups – mini-lathe, tools, grinder and grinding jig. These are to be given away to the four winners of the Essay Contest that is targeted to young beginning woodturners. This is an exciting new program that is associated with the Youth Turning Symposium. Thanks to the vendors who donated the prizes in the raffle, and to those who bought lots and lots of tickets.

It will be a few weeks until we get a fix on the other financial results of this event, but it was a huge fund raiser for the Guild, since not a single person associated with the event is paid for their time! Eventually, the profit will be divided three ways – the Guild’s Scholarship Fund, the Guild’s operating budget, and Pinkerton Academy’s woodworking program.

Speaking of Pinkerton, the school is such an amazing place to host the Symposium. The facilities are perfect for our needs, and the receptive attitude of the school makes us feel welcome. Jack Grube is the person who makes that all possible, and who works tirelessly on every aspect of the event. He can not be thanked enough for his inspired efforts.

Overall, those of us who planned the event could...
Inaugural Youth Symposium

Friday, May 12th saw the inaugural Youth Turning Symposium take place at Pinkerton Academy. Jack Grube put together a program designed specifically for high school and middle school students, and he promoted it through a network of wood shop teachers that he has been instrumental in creating.

Attendance surpassed anyone’s highest expectations, with almost 200 students and perhaps 50 or so adult supervisors, coming from 25 schools. Four demonstrators offered a wide variety of presentations that were specifically tailored to the young beginners audience. Beth Ireland (MA), Robert Rosand (PA), Allan Lacer (MN) and Dustin Coates (NH) developed programming that really caught the attention of the students, and it was obvious that many of them left Pinkerton on Friday afternoon anxious to get working in their own schools’ workshops.

A lot of interest was shown in the Essay Contest where the four winners will receive complete turning setups, including a mini-lathe, a set of tools, a grinding setup, and some wood to turn. The $1600 raised in the raffle the next day at the New England Woodturning Symposium paid for the lathe setups, and the organizers of both events are really excited about the plans for getting equipment right into the hands of some new turners.

And that relates to the overall point of the Youth Symposium – we all want to encourage new turners to enter the world which we already love. The activities on Friday were truly a wonder to observe. Jack Grube’s vision and dogged determination to make this event a reality resulted in an initial event that already looked like a seasoned winner, and will doubtless lead to more activities and events that support student woodturners. Congratulations to Jack for a job well done!

The American Association of Woodturners paid for most of the costs of the Youth Symposium with a grant of $1000. Thanks to the AAW for helping make this inspired idea into a meaningful and resounding success – Peter Bloch, Overall Coordinator

Horton Brasses Comes to Pinkerton

Horton Brasses was the presenter at the April general meeting at Pinkerton Academy. Barbara Horton Rockwell was assisted by her son Orion Horton Henderson. The firm’s history goes back to 1936 when her grandfather started manufacturing reproduction hardware that his wife was using for her antique and used furniture business during the depression. The company management is now transitioning to Orion as the 4th generation family member to operate the business. The firm has now grown to fourteen employees and $2 million in sales to hobbyists, antique dealers and cabinet manufacturers. The firm is now located in Cromwell, CT although the architectural hardware is fabricated by seven blacksmiths working in their own shops. Horton Brasses focuses entirely on reproduction hardware copies and does not perform any design development.

American cabinet hardware traces back to the 1620’s Pilgrim times with very primitive hardware cast from brass. At that time, England restricted manufactured metal imports and only wanted raw materials. This shortage forced the colonists to buy other metal products that were then melted and re-cast.

By the 1750s, the industrial revolution was under way in England, but was delayed into the colonies where casting was still a slow manufacturing process. Although stamping is sometimes viewed as an inferior process, high quality stamping designs can be created using a die/mold combination. Soft steel dies and molds can be carved with leatherworker tools. The early Horton Brass die/molds required Barbara’s grandfather to carve for weeks. They are a humbling work of craftsmanship. The correct term for the craftsman who performs this work is “diesinker” and the skill is similar to a monetary engraver. However, an engraver at one of the mints does not have to work on both a die and mold. The critical issue for carving the die and mold is the requirement for the minute dimensional differences that will allow the 0.016" thick brass plate to be stamped without tearing the brass. The die and mold are clamped into a 600 lb. drop hammer that is embedded into the production floor and extends into the attic. The die/mold life was predicted to last for 35 years, but has lasted

Continued on Page 28
have often wondered why anyone would choose wood as a medium to make a hollow vessel. Surely if one needed such an object, it would be easier to use some deformable material. The logical result would be pottery thrown on a wheel or blown glass. But I finally got my answer. Brad Vietje raised the question, “Why do hollow turning?” His answer is that this creates a piece with mystery. Like the far side of the moon, the part of the interior of the turning is the part that you just can’t see.

Brad pointed out that pieces of wood with holes or voids were actually easier to hollow than those which are solid. The intermittence of the cut causes a little vibration of the tool. But this is a minor disadvantage compared to the advantage that it solves to some degree. The two most significant hurdles in hollow turning are releasing the chips and seeing what you are doing. To this end, Brad demonstrated with a vase form which he perforated with numerous holes about one inch in diameter. He drilled these holes into the piece after the outside was done. He called this the “wiffle ball” effect. This technique allowed us to see the tool in the vase while he was turning the inside.

The second presenter was Donna Banfield who has experience with the OneWay hollowing apparatus which uses a laser beam to detect wall thickness. This eliminates one of the two major difficulties of hollowing. And while the work still needs to be stopped frequently to remove the chips, there is no need to measure the wall thickness with calipers. This device also captures the boring tool so that it allows free movement in two dimensions, but it can neither tilt nor rotate.

With only 25 minutes remaining on the schedule, the final speaker, Graham Oakes, came up to the lathe. One of Jack Grube’s students, Graham is now a senior at Pinkerton. He had great success last year participating in the Creative Enterprise program which was developed by Jack and Beth Ireland through funding from a Guild grant. Graham makes all his own tools out of bits of tool steel and metal bars. He measures the wall thickness with a piece of wire bent into a “C” shape. He combines the use of simple shop-made tools with his own passion for woodturning, and in doing so sets an example for all of us. This 18 year old displayed confidence and skill in a presentation that was both relaxed and jam packed with information. In a word, his demonstration was stunning. I must say that having attended almost every Guild meeting in its 15 year history, I have never been so enthralled by a demonstrator, even compared to others who have made careers out of teaching woodworking.
May 6th, 2006

Period Furniture Group

The Period Furniture Group had its final meeting of the Guild year at Les Huckins’ shop in central New Hampshire. “Shop” isn’t really accurate. As Les was talking about his beechwood end table, he happened to mention that the tree came from his property. We asked how he had had it dried and milled. “Oh, in the sawmill out back”. “Sawmill? ... (silence while this sinks in) … Could we see the sawmill?” “Well, yes … you mean now?”

So out we trooped. This is a sawmill worthy of a small commercial lumberyard. The immense blade (3/8” kerf, capable of sawing 15” wide planks) is driven by a power take-off from Les’s large John Deere tractor. The old barn is stacked with stickered pine and cherry planks. It appears though, that milling can only be done in summer. To roll the logs onto the saw platform (made out of an old school bus frame) it is necessary to remove one of the main support columns holding up the barn roof. This is no problem in summer, but the column is needed to prevent the barn roof from collapsing under snow loads.

It turns out Les lives on a 300 acre estate that has been in his family since long before the revolution. It is spectacularly beautiful. Besides cleared, rolling fields, his property includes ample woodlands where he has harvested lumber for the homes he has built for his family that grace the site. You never can tell what unexpected adventures you will have when you come to a Period Furniture meeting!

April 1st, 2006

Beginner & Intermediate Group

Crown molding was the topic for the April BIG meeting at Bob LaCivita’s shop in Nottingham, NH. Bob described the many ways that he uses crown molding in both furniture design and architectural applications. We were shown how to make a simple mitered and cove cut style of crown using the table saw combined with a CMT crown molding cutter. He finished by applying a bead on the lower edge using a router table.

This is a labor intensive way to produce molding. If one were doing this professionally, it would be better to use a machine such as the locally manufactured Williams and Hussey Molder that Bob uses. They have a full line of standard knives and can make custom knives from a drawing. Bob emphasized that you had better enjoy hand sanding if you are going to make high quality crown as there are no machines to sand the complex profiles and maintain crisp edges.

The rest of the meeting was dedicated to the methods of application. He described how to avoid problems with seasonal wood movement when using crown in furniture construction. The many issues associated with installation in both new and old buildings were touched on. Things like the fact that you almost never have a perfectly straight wall or ceiling line and the fact that angles are never exactly ninety degrees.

We got a demonstration of how to cope cut a molding for a precise fit on an inside corner. He showed us how to make a fixture for miter cutting crown on the chop saw. The meeting closed with a question and answer session.
Canterbury Shaker Village’s Wood Days

Canterbury Shaker Village’s 16th annual Wood Days, a celebration of traditional New England woodworking, will be held Saturday, June 24, and Sunday, June 25, 2006 in Canterbury, NH. The event will feature furnituremakers, boat builders, carvers and other woodworking artists demonstrating their crafts.

Participants and visitors to the event will have the opportunity of visiting David Lamb’s shop and seeing his work and his collection of antique woodworking tools.

Tours and discussions on setting up these and other machines will be included. Lineshafting will also be covered. Of special note are David’s bandsaws. The John White Company made a specialty of large bandsaws, and David has eight different models from this New Hampshire company, six of which being on display. Come see the latest restoration project – the Dover Giant Resaw. This was Whites’ second largest saw. It has 48” wheels and a six roller power feed powered by Gordon’s Patent Variable Speed Pulley. This piece is in the beginning stages of restoration.

Joining David will be the Page Belting Company. Dave Terrell will set up and have a demonstration of making leather flat power transmission belting as was used in nearly all industrial machinery of the past (before the widespread use of direct drive machines). Page Belting is one of the last survivors of this once thriving industry and is still a major player. There will be demonstrations and discussions of sizing, splicing and lacing of belting on individual machines and from lineshaft to machine. Page also manufactures synthetic belting which will be covered as well.

There is a great possibility we will be having a seasoned machinist pouring Babbitt bearings. For those leery of old machines because of Babbitt bearings, come and see how easy and straightforward this “low tech” material is to work. It has been quite a few years since Bill Thomas poured Babbitt in his Hillsboro shop, so this refresher may be timely for many.

Canterbury Shaker Village is located at 244 Shaker Rd. in Canterbury, NH. Wood Days runs from 10:00 am - 4:00 pm each day. Contact tsvfrey@shakers.org for more information.

League of NH Craftsmen’s Annual Fair

The Annual League of NH Craftsmen’s Fair will take place August 5-13 at Mount Sunapee Resort in Newbury, NH. More than 35,000 people attend this prestigious craft fair, which is the oldest and one of the largest in the country. Fine contemporary and traditional handcraft in virtually every type of craft medium, including furniture, jewelry, glass, pottery, prints, metalwork, fiber arts, woodcarvings, weaving, sculptures, and leatherwork, are on display in the Fair’s craft tents and exhibitions and may be purchased. These handcrafted items represent the fine skill and creativity of more than 350 state-juried members of the League of NH Craftsmen.

There are daily demonstrations and workshops for all ages on the traditional methods of making fine handcraft. Glass blowing, woodcarving and furniture building – these are just some of the craftmaking skills that will be on display.

Daily tours of the Fair are to be given by seasoned collectors and master craftspeople of the League. Focusing on a particular type of craft, fairgoers will take a 45-minute tour of the craft booths and exhibitions, including detailed commentary on the techniques and artistry that go into making fine handcraft.

The 73rd Annual League of NH Craftsmen Fair will be open from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm daily, rain or shine, from August 5-13. Ticket prices include admission to all exhibitions and demonstrations, as well as a second day free return to the Fair. Admission is $8 for adults; $6 for seniors; and children 12 and under are free.

NH Furniture Masters Events

NH Historical Society’s Tuck Library
Beyond Tradition: New Works by New Hampshire Furniture Masters
July 13-July 26, 2006
Tue.-Sat., 9:30 am to 5:00 pm

30 Park St., Concord, NH
Admission is free

Silent Auction & Opening Reception
Thurs., July 13, 2006
Doors open – 5:30 pm

Technical Talks with Garrett Hack, David Lamb, Ted Blachly, William Thomas and Brian Sargent
Sat., July 15, 10:00 am to 11:30 am
Please RSVP to Chris MacLeod at 603-756-0604

NH Institute of Art, Amherst Street Gallery
July 28-August 26, 2006
Mon.-Fri., 9:00 am to 5:00 pm
Sat. 9:00 am to Noon
77 Amherst St., Manchester, NH
Admission is free

NHFMA Annual Auction
Sunday, October 22, 2006
Wentworth-by-the-Sea, New Castle, NH
Auctioneer: Frank Eaton
Doors open, 4:30 pm. Tickets to the event are $75 per person and entitle the holder to attend the gala reception and auction and receive a 2006, four-color commemorative auction catalogue. To purchase tickets or obtain additional information, visit the Association’s website www.furnituremasters.org or telephone 603-898-0242.

Upcoming Guild Meetings

- June 16 – Summer Trip to Nichols & Stone (furnituremaker) in Gardner, MA plus Starrett (tool maker) in Athol, MA. Meet at Gardner, MA plus Starrett (tool maker) in Athol, MA. Meet at 10:00 am at Starrett. See details on page 3.

Beginner & Intermediate Group

The next BIG meeting topic is sharpening – hand saws, plane blades, chisels and anything else people want to see. The meeting is June 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
Period Furniture Group

There is no meeting during the summer. The next meeting will be on September 9, 2006. To be placed on the e-mail (or telephone) notification list for this and future meetings, contact …
John Whiteside
603-679-5443 or johninfremont@comcast.net

Granite State Woodturners

The next meeting of the Granite State Woodturners will be on Saturday, July 22 at 9:00 am at Moose Mountain Lodge in Etna, NH.

This is our annual critique meeting. Bring a sample of your latest work for the critique session. I want to remind beginners and advanced turners alike that this is not an intimidating or competitive process. The object is for all of us to learn from the discussion, and participate in it.

Contact Jon Siegel to be added to the e-mail notification list.
Jon Siegel — big@proctornet.com

Guitar Making Class Anyone?

Looking for companions(s) to attend beginners steel-string guitar making course in the NE area, this year or next. I am interested in taking such a course and thought if one or two guild members were also interested, it would be more fun. Such courses seem to involve a couple of weeks full-time study and we come home with new guitars!

John Whiteside
603-679-5443 or johninfremont@comcast.net

Personal Notes

Steve Olesin — Tragic news. One of our community of woodworkers, Steve Olesin and his wife, Jane, were killed in an auto accident on April 16 while visiting with family in NY/NJ. A service was held at the Congregational Church in Acton, MA on April 22.

Steve wrote an article for the April issue of The Old Saw, had just published a book and was working on another. He also was working with Fine Woodworking on material for an upcoming issue. In addition to membership in GNHW, Steve was the president of the Eastern Massachusetts Guild of Woodworkers. Tragedies like this remind us just how precious life is. Our prayers are with his family. — Jim Seroskie

LATEH ...

Nova 3000 — Extended bed, Nova stand, Leeson 1.5 HP motor with speed control — $950

Richard Brennan: 603-783-9493 or richardbrennan@aol.com

MORTISER ...

Multico PM20 — 1/2HP mortiser. Like new, 115v industrial motor 4 ¾” vertical stroke, handles chisel & bit set to ¾” wide, allows you to move entire headstock left, right, forward & back w/o moving your work. (Paid $1099) — $750

Lou Powell: 603-664-7559 or lgp@unh.edu

JOINER ...


Jim Seroskie: 603-673-2123 or jsiroskie@verizon.net

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