Every organization reaches milestones. Some continue to keep reaching for the next goals, others plateau, regroup and try again, and others recede. The Guild has been on a steady path of improvement. Most of the members are aware that the website www.gnhw.org has reached a new milestone. Thanks to the hard work of Jim Seroskie and Bob Couch who put in countless hours creating this gem that is ours.

In today’s electronic world, our website is the public’s first impression of the Guild. The public is getting a great impression. From a member’s point of view, I look at the website as a tool to communicate with other members and introduce the general public to this great organization.

On the home page, you will see “What’s Happening.” Scroll down to the first item “New Web Site.” What is this all about? Click the link and the new website is explained for you through word and diagram.

From my vantage point with average computer skills, this is what I see. The new site has improved members’ means to communicate through the use of blogs, discussion groups, video and even music on

A Big Thank you to DJ Delorie

The Guild would like to thank DJ Delorie and his wife Patty for all their hard work over the years. DJ was the webmaster and membership coordinator and I know Patty helped especially with bank deposits. DJ not only built and managed the site, he also hosted it on his own server.

As membership coordinator, he registered all new members and renewals, entered any new information in the database, printed and mailed membership cards and deposited the checks. Through the years, I always looked at his efficiency with amazement. I would email him a question and in minutes, sometimes seconds, I would have a reply with an answer. I would mail my membership renewal and within days I would receive my card. Again, thanks for a job very well done. – Bob LaCivita
The next meeting of the Guild will be held on February 20 at Alan Mitchell’s Homestead Woodworking School in Newmarket. It’s a good thing that this meeting is being held in a school because you’re going to learn so much. So bring a pad and pen, you’re going to want to take notes.

Get to The Homestead between 9 and 9:30 a.m. so you get a chance to take out the latest Guild DVDs, get coffee, check the latest Guild cap and shirt fashions, and catch up with the friends you haven’t seen since November 21.

Shortly after 10 a.m., take your seat and pay attention. The morning’s first session will be on the Guild’s newly expanded website. Don’t be thinking you’re going to sleep in on Saturday; this demonstration you won’t want to miss. There are now as many ways to use the website as Garrett Hack has planes. Want to reserve a spot at the next Small Meetings, do it on the website. Need to RSVP to a subgroup leader, do it on the website. Thinking about finding a ride to the next Guild meeting, do that on the website. Blogs, classified ads, calendar events, etc are there too. Jim Seroskie will take us through the new features and demonstrate the good stuff.

Safety has to be the most underrated topic among people who choose topics for quarterly meetings. Now I know better. Safety issues are of interest to woodworkers. We all relate to the topic, sometimes too well. It’s the safety issues you don’t know (like ladders) that are the most dangerous. Alan Mitchell will be discussing some of the latest concerns that woodworkers face. Take good notes, the fingers you save will be your own.

After lunch and the business meeting, Terry Moore has agreed to show us what real veneering is. He will demonstrate some skills, talk about design considerations when using veneers, and maybe explain some of the methods used. If you don’t take good notes, no problem, Peter Bloch will be doing the video recording of Terry’s demo and producing the DVDs, which you’ll be looking for at the April meeting.

“There are now as many ways to use the website as Garrett Hack has planes.”

Directions to Homestead
From Rt 125 north, turn right onto Rt 87 in Epping. After 3 miles turn left onto Bald Hill Road. The school is 1.1 miles on the left.

From Rt 108 south, turn right onto Rt 152 in Newmarket. Go past the high school and turn left onto Grant Road. After 3.5 miles turn left onto Bald Hill Road. The school is 0.5 miles on the right.

For a simple map on the Homestead website, click www.woodschoolnh.com/Map.html.

The Guild of NH Woodworkers
President Bob LaCivita
Vice President Greg Benulis
Secretary Claude Dupuis
Treasurer Peter James
Old Saw Editor Michael O. Moore
michael@odohertymoore.com
www.GNHW.org
President Talks Insurance

A number of months ago questions were raised concerning the Guild’s insurance. Most of the questions were raised by sub groups regarding accidents taking place in a member’s personal shop. When asked about this, I did not have a definitive answer.

With the help of Guild Vice President Greg Benulis, we began to study the slow, confusing world of liability insurance. We made calls to the Guild’s agent and received less than satisfactory answers. Or should I say, the answers were not clear to me.

I then asked a client, who was a retired agent, to read our policy and explain it to me. He gladly read all 41 pages and when I met with him he told me what it covered.

The Guild’s policy is a liability policy. It is not a medical insurance or workmen’s compensation. The policy covers negligence on the Guild’s part to non-members only. If an injury occurred, the non-member would have to file a lawsuit which our insurance company would handle. Members hosting Guild events have no liability coverage from the Guild should another Guild member be injured on their premises.

Greg is working on a waiver of liability we will have demonstrators sign in the future.

By Robert LaCivita

President’s Message continued

Old Saw Policy Change

The Steering Committee has had continuing discussions about moving The Old Saw to an on-line only publication vs continuing to print and mail hard copies to the membership. Many members (many more than anticipated) had opted-in to continue receiving paper.

The January Steering Committee meeting produced a motion and vote to grandfather the members without email as of Jan 1, 2010 plus complimentary copies to each non-member advertiser. It was felt that advertisers, who provide a direct benefit to members through their discount programs, needed to see their physical ads to ensure their continued support. Members beyond those 24 grandfathered will be provided a web site link through the weekly TouchUps email announcing each edition.

The motion was made, seconded and accepted unanimously. The reasons for the change included the major issue of budgetary concerns over mailing costs as well as an acknowledgement that current and past issues are now available online. — Jim Seroskie

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If you want to make a donation or apply for a scholarship, you can do that from the site. I highly encourage both activities. We have a new car pool section, matching drivers with riders. You can read Old Saw highlights, frequently asked questions, the classified ads, access entire back issues of the Old Saw and in the members only section the Journal. The list goes on. There are over 80 pages of content for your use.

I would like to encourage our reluctant members who do not have a computer to get acquainted with this vast resource. It is the largest pool of information the Guild offers. All of the members of the Guild have access to the Internet even if they don’t know it. Your first source is your public library—even my small town has three computers for public use. I asked my librarian about people who have little or no experience using the computer and the internet and she explained that provided that the traffic is low, she is happy to help people get started. Another option is pay-for-use stores like Kinko’s. The best option is to ask other Guild members if they would let you peruse the Guild web site from their home computer. Please take advantage of this information—it is for your benefit.
The November Guild Meeting was held in Scott Ruesswick’s shop in Canterbury, NH. Following our new format, the morning session featured a presentation by the Granite State Woodturners (GSWT), one of our many Guild subgroups, while the afternoon attraction was a presentation by long-time Guild member and founder Ted Blachly.

The GSWT is one of the largest subgroups in the Guild and is also affiliated with the American Association of Wood Turners. Dave Belser, GSWT president, kicked off the session, and when he asked who had ever tried turning, nearly all of the roughly 50 members present indicated they had at one time or another stood in front of a lathe with a chisel in their hand, attesting to the popularity of turning. Nevertheless, I always find it exciting for most of us to watch and learn from other turners and to “try this at home” following the meeting.

The session consisted of a short tutorial/demonstration of turning green bowls by Ron Pouliot, followed by an opportunity for hands on turning. Ron began with a roughly 4” thick by 8” diameter European Beech blank which had been freshly cut. Green wood turns very nicely and easily, but this is no substitute for sharp chisels. The blank was mounted with a screw held in a 4-jaw chuck mounted on the lathe spindle. Ron begins by forming a tenon on what will be the bottom of the bowl, and then shapes the outside.

He emphasized the importance of cutting the blank in the direction from the foot to the top when forming the outside of the bowl; this minimizes tear out since the fibers being cut by the gouge will be supported by the yet uncut fibers. Of equal importance is maintaining contact of the gouge bevel with the wood – i.e. “rubbing the bevel” – to get a smooth, tear-free
surface. One’s stance in front of the lathe is also significant; he starts with weight on his right foot and transfers weight to the left foot as he sways his body and cuts a smooth continuous surface defining the bowl shape.

Once the outside is defined, Ron removes the blank and mounts it to the 4-jaw chuck using the tenon which was cut on the bottom of the blank in the initial turning. He then hollows out the inside using a gouge and starts near the center of the blank. All cuts are made from the top towards the bottom of the bowl so that the fibers are always supported by the yet uncut fibers. Again, rubbing the bevel is essential to get a clean cut.

Green wood will move as it dries, so one has two options when turning green: 1. complete the bowl to its final shape and allow it to “warp,” creating (hopefully) a unique and pleasing contour, or 2. leave the walls “thick” (about 10% of the diameter), store in a paper bag until “dry,” and then remount and reshape the bowl to perfect symmetry. Both methods are routinely used by turners. The decision is a personal choice.

Following the demonstration, members had an opportunity to practice what they just learned. Several mini lathes were loaned by Tom McLaughlin with wood blanks provided by our host, Scott Ruesswick. Members, coached by Tony Immorlica and Donna Banfield, and took turns applying the techniques demonstrated by Ron. For more information on green bowl turning, you might browse many of the fine books on woodturning. One book devoted to green turning is “Turning Green Wood” by Michael O’Donnell.

Following our business meeting and brown bag lunch, a presentation was made by Ted Blachly, a founding member of our Guild. Ted works exclusively with solid hardwoods and began his talk with a slide presentation of the custom furniture he has made throughout his woodworking career.

Ted usually starts a project with a simple sketch which he shares with his customer. They discuss features, dimensions and embellishments. Once they reach agreement on the piece, Ted makes a mockup using 2X construction lumber to get a feel for the full scale dimensions and shape. He might also color the wood to represent the tone of the selected hardwood, and design some of the details such as drawer pulls and cabinet feet.

Next comes a full-scale drawing and selection of wood. Ted spends considerable time selecting wood for matching grain and figure, particularly for gluing up larger panels. It helps to have boards which are sequentially cut from a singly log, and he often buys whole trees which are milled to his specifications.

Ted showed the process of building two pieces – a pedestal made from curly cherry having double taper laminated curved legs, and a sideboard made from a superb claro walnut log obtained from California. While the walnut was beautiful, working with a 150 to 200 year old tree does have issues with its embedded bullets, barbed wire, cracks and defects. Nevertheless, Ted converted these “big nasty planks” into a great piece of furniture and showed us how he dealt with defects by inlaying wood with similar figure from another board.

He also shared with us the construction details including sliding dovetails, drawer stops and custom-made pulls utilizing cotter pins and rosewood. The curly cherry pedestal table also involved some creative construction techniques and joinery, and required a “massive” MDF form for gluing the laminations.

If you would like to see the details and hear the talk by Ted, you can check out a Guild video which documented his entire presentation.
Enthusiasm for Tom McLaughlin’s Traditional Chest Making remains high with 32 members turning out for session two at McLaughlin Woods Custom Fine Furniture in Canterbury on Saturday morning, Dec 5, 2009.

After focusing on the big picture and gluing up boards for the sides in session one, Tom proceeded to demonstrate dovetailing for the case, or box, in session two.

The first phase is to construct the box. Molding, feet and top are then applied to the box.

Sides are 19” deep by 31½” high by ¾” thick. Tom used a drum sander after gluing up the sides. The back is also ¾” thick. Drawer dividers are a separate step.

Tom cautioned that it’s easy to get “dyslexic” cutting dovetails, so he recommends making notations and having a consistent marking system, such as using a script “f” for a face mark. Once you get the concept, it’s repetition that leads to learning and mastering dovetails, according to Tom. Making a chest of drawers involves cutting a lot of dovetails and the forgiving parts are the top and bottom which will be covered.

Dovetails for the case consist of pins, usually cut into the end grain of the side, and tails, usually cut from the long grain of the top and bottom. Tom uses half pins on the ends, or corners. A good idea is to practice a little, then start into the project. Cutting the tails first makes it easier to transfer the marks for the pins onto the second board.

If you decide to use a jig, one that is adjustable will produce more natural looking dovetails. However, Tom warns, just because it’s a jig doesn’t mean you can’t mess it up.

Tom hand cut his dovetails for BIG, the same way most traditional chests are made.

Since the top and bottom of the box are of secondary wood, a strip of the primary wood must be glued along the front edge. Tom produces the edges for two boards in one step by gluing a wide strip of primary woods between the top board and bottom, board then ripping if down the middle. (Hint: you can do all the drawer sides at once).

Marking for Cuts—Tom begins the dovetails by setting a marking gauge to ½” depth. That’s the length of the tails. Stack and staircase your boards.

Focus on the fence being flat on the end and lightly drag it across the board. Set the bevel toward the end. Flip the stack and mark the opposite sides of the boards. Do this with both ends of the boards. Carry your marks over to the ends.

Dovetail angles can vary, with angles of 10° or 14° being the most common. Another way to think of it is as a ratio, for example, one-to-five (1:5), meaning a slope of 1” over a length of 5”. The steeper ratio of one-to-eight (1:8) is used more for hardwoods. For the ends of cases, Tom prefers 1:5. You also need to decide how wide a slot to cut between each of your tails. Tom goes with ½”, measuring from the scribe line.

Tom first estimates rough increments, for example, 7 tails across 21”, gives a spread of 3”, then lays a T-square or ruler pivoting from the left-hand corner at the end of the board until he reaches 21”es along the face of the board on the opposite side. Then he marks at every three “es, carrying the mark up to the end of the board and the scribe line. Then mark the tail width ¾” from the center marks along the edge in 3” increments.
You can make a story stick from a small piece of plywood. Tom uses cardboard drawings, or patterns, for drawers.

Tom said American saws cut on the push stroke, while Japanese saws cut on the pull stroke. Cut to the waste side of your line. Another hint from Tom: Cut all right-handed tails across the width of the board, then go back and cut all the left-handed tails. Cut to the scribe line. Use a coping saw to cut the waste out but stop above the scribe line. Cut your corners with the board on end in a vise. (Support the bottom of the board, using, for example, a stool for support.) When chiseling, don’t chisel all the way through on the first side. Leave 1/32˝ or so ahead of the scribe line. Finally, get a good clean, square cut on your scribe line. Set the chisel right on the knife line. It helps to have sharp tools.

After a short break, Tom talked about transferring marks from the tails to the pin board. All these marks need to be for cuts 1/2˝ deep. Put scribe lines on the side slightly strong, Tom advised. (You can plane pins later if they stick out. Use a low angle block plane to take down pins that are proud.)

After scribing, put the side upside down in a vise. Tom cautioned that when you size the top and bottom, double check them for square and make sure the ends are parallel.

If you mark accurately, when you cut to those marks, what could go wrong? Tom asked.

You’ve got to have a good marking knife. The advantage of a marking knife is it gives you a place to set your chisel for perfection. Saw to the waste side of the mark. If you miss on the waste side, you can lightly chisel on the knife mark.

Tom lays the side flat on a bench top to chisel to transfer the marks around to the edge.

Now we are dealing with the precision part to make it fit really well, he said. (Hint: You could drag a pencil in the knife mark as a highlighter.)

Tom said it is a philosophical question whether to leave tool marks on your work. You can over saw on the inside past the knife mark since it won’t be seen.

For the typical dovetail, it’s a rip cut. If you make a mistake and have loose joints, always shim and glue on the pin, he said, because you won’t see the glue joint as easily on end grain. It doesn’t matter if it’s not “spot on” because it isn’t going to be seen.

Practice on scrap wood, then move on to the real thing.

Compared to using hand cuts, routing is noisy and risky, Tom said.

For half-blind dovetails, Tom roughs out the cut with a 5/8˝ Forstner bit on the drill press. He stays 1/16˝ shy of the line.

Tom demonstrated hogging out between pins for a half-blind dovetail joint on the drill press. Tom stays 1/8th ˝ or so away from the back line. The drill press step makes less work to clean it up. Next, clean out the joints with chisels. Look for “rising” spots and pare away.

**Drawer dividers**—For your chest, you’ll need to construct drawer dividers, runners and gliders within the box. You’ll need to decide what kind of joinery to use to get the dividers in place. One option is the sliding dovetail. Mechanically, it’s an excellent joint, Tom said. You can also use a twin tenon.

This interior work has to be done before glue up. You can glue in two stages, starting with the inner most parts and working your way out. Quarter sawn material is more stable. Use solid material for front dividers, about 2 1/4˝. Quarter sawn material is more stable.

On the table saw, rout a dado in the back center. Oak or ash is good for drawer runners. They are screwed into the dado. You would slide in a dust partition.

Drawer dividers are not glued in the back. Rear dividers can be secondary wood, for example, poplar. Tom is using left over eucalyptus.

Tom is making two chests, one of walnut in traditional style and one of curly maple with contemporary design elements. Chest dimensions are 39 1/2˝ high (including top and feet), by 38˝ wide by 19˝ deep.

BIG attendees who follow along at home and make their own chests of drawers will get more out of BIG classes. Audi Pauliuonis is chronicling his “follow along” experience for The Journal. The sequence for building the chest is: 1) the case; 2) the interior; 3) feet and moldings; and 4) finishing.