The Newsletter of the Guild of New Hampshire Woodworkers

President’s Message by Bob LaCivita

The Guild year is in full swing with more than enough meetings for everybody. From general meetings to sub-group meetings you could spend a part of most weekends at one Guild function or another.

I have noticed that the general Guild meeting participation is down a bit. The last two general meetings averaged about 45 members. I could understand the reluctance of some members to drive all that way to Hanover for the annual meeting with gas prices rising. But I was surprised by the November meeting at Scott Ruesswick’s shop in Canterbury, the most central location we use and close to interstate route 93 too. I ask myself, what does this mean? Are people using the rider board**? Are more people going to sub-group meetings to focus on their specialty and less to the general meetings? Are members going to the website to find out what the meetings are offering?

I do not know. I realize that some members join for the discounts, others for the journal, many for the camaraderie, some for the scholarships and others for the education. It is hard to fathom that ninety percent of our members are not getting the full benefit of their membership because they do not attend these meetings. Where are the rest? I know we have out of state and international members. I do not expect to see them. The vast majority of members are from the southern tier of New Hampshire and many of these meetings are a reasonable drive for them, especially if they share a ride.

The lectures and demonstrations are very high quality. Al Saffron has made a great effort to bring the level of the meetings up to a higher level. Meetings that not only a nubie would like but an

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Calling All Furnituremakers

The Guild has been invited to have an exhibit of our member’s work in the library at NH Technical Institute (NHTI) in Concord, NH for the month of January.

The purpose is to display our work and all skill levels are welcome. Members are encouraged to submit a photo and description of your piece(s). Unless we are overwhelmed with submissions, all pieces will be accepted as long as they are finished and complete. No partially completed work please.

Pieces exhibited will not be for sale, however, your contact information will be displayed with your piece. Pieces being exhibited must be delivered to the library on January 3rd between 3:30 pm and 5:00 pm. All pieces must be picked up on January 28th between 3:30 pm and 4:30 pm.

The GSWT subgroup had a very successful exhibit of their work during the month of October. If you have any questions, you may e-mail submissions@gnhw.org.
Three Boat Shops

Aside from the more sophisticated professional shops I’ve worked in and visited, I’ve found boat shops to consist of whatever space and shelter is available to the boatbuilder. For the amateur boat builder, the need to build a boat can usually overcome any want for premium building space.

Basements make good boat shops, as do attics, living rooms (shared living rooms do not), garages and backyards. From Maine to Hawaii, Ireland to Turkey, and most coastal points in between, boats have traditionally been built on beaches convenient for launching at high tide. Traditional building methods are for the most part not weather-sensitive, so a minimum in the way of shelter is required.

A brief description of three successful professional boat shops follows. Although these shops are not climate-controlled, especially well lit, or hurricane-proof, each provides adequate shelter for the purpose of building wooden boats.

Reuel Parker (Parker Marine Enterprises) has been building boats under the tropical sun of south Florida for more than 35 years.

Captain Parker’s beautiful wooden boats, some longer than 50 feet, are built with nothing between him and the Florida weather but a taut tarp and a cool breeze.

Ross Gannon and Nat Benjamin (Gannon & Benjamin Marine Railway) started their boat repair and building business on the beach at Vineyard Haven (MA) in 1980.

The two things that make their operation unique are the marine railway and the open “to the weather” workshop. The railway allows for large vessels to be hauled without the need for a deep-water slip and travel-lift. The three-sided workshop with generous roof overhang provides adequate protection from the weather year ‘round. The one open side allows the curious wooden boat enthusiast to view the current project without being an obstacle to progress.

The Woodward Boat Shop in Saranac Lake, NY features a wooden floor and large windows. A wood burning stove takes the bite out of cold Adirondack winter days, although it doesn’t do much for the frost on the windows.

Willard Hanmer, a third-generation Adirondack guideboat builder, built this boat shop in 1930. Willard’s wife Ben often worked beside him in the shop and after his death in 1963, Ben and Carl Hathaway (apprentice to Willard) finished up the boats under construction.

Carl bought the shop from Ben and continued building...
The Guild of New Hampshire Woodworkers

President—Bob LaCivita • Vice President—Bob Couch • Secretary—Claude Dupuis • Treasurer—C Peter James
Old Saw Editor—Michael Brown

Three Boat Shops continued

traditional guideboats and taught others the craft. One of Carl’s students, Christopher Woodward, bought the shop from Carl in 1991, and today carries on the tradition of Adirondack guide boat building in the area where the craft first developed.

Wooden boat building practically disappeared with the introduction of fiberglass boats in the late 1950s and 1960s, but fortunately a few wooden boatbuilding shops in New England and elsewhere survived. In 1974 Jon Wilson published the first issue of WoodenBoat magazine and wooden boat enthusiasts around the world found each other. The popularity of wooden boats has grown and wooden boat shops from New England to Florida, from the Great Lakes to the West Coast, are more numerous than ever.

Woodward Boat Shop

Presidents Message continued

experienced woodworker as well. This has been a great accomplishment. Al is always considering new ways to enhance the meetings; an example is the short morning lectures that have been very well received. I feel the social side of the meetings is important as well. This is a chance to meet with old friends and acquaintances or make new ones. It is a time to talk about your passion for woodworking with the New Hampshire woodworking community. It is a time to talk about that new piece of equipment or hand tool you just purchased, to discuss problems or accomplishments you are having with a project. The list goes on and on.

I would like to encourage you to attend a general meeting. Come introduce yourself to me. If I do not recognize you I will most likely introduce myself. If you have an idea for a meeting, talk to me about it. This is your Guild. I would like to encourage you to check the website, particularly the announcements and the calendar, for up coming meetings and events. Every Wednesday an email called Touch Ups is sent, this is a short list of up coming Guild events for a one-month period.

I hope to see you at the next meeting in February.

** If you go to the website home page you will find the menu in red at the top of the page. Click News. The menu will drop down and you will find Need A Ride- Click it and the rider board, a list of people needing or giving a ride, will appear. You can also list that you are willing to give a ride or you are looking for a ride. Here is the link [gnhw.org/pages/news_needRide.shtml](http://gnhw.org/pages/news_needRide.shtml).
October 23, 2010

Twice a year on designated Saturdays the Guild offers a day of multiple small meetings. They offer participants an opportunity to gather in smaller groups at members shops or to tour institutions of interest to woodworkers. The meetings have one thing in common, an opportunity to learn.

This fall four meetings were offered. The meetings were woodcarving, wooden toys for needy children, sharpening techniques and a tour of Creek Farm Cottage in Portsmouth. Here are snapshots of the meetings.

Toys for Children at Hal Liberty’s Shop

Hal builds wooden toys at his shop in Bradford, NH that are distributed through the Red Cross, Marine Corp Toys for Tots and other charitable organizations.

Hal did a fine job of explaining his process to us. He has made many jigs to speed up the work and keep things uniform. The finish used is child safe. Each toy is tested to make sure it won’t pull apart. He has different groups of volunteers that help out with production. If anyone is interested in helping Hal, they could work at the shop or at home. They could make a complete product or parts to be assembled by others at his shop.

Woodcarving at William Schnute’s Studio

A small meeting for interested wood carvers was held on a beautiful fall day at the Oak Leaves Studio of William Schnute. OLS is located at the Frye’s Measure Mill complex in Wilton, NH. The mill is on the National Register of Historic Places and is the oldest (1850) and only active water-powered measure mill left in the US. It produces a number of wooden measuring devices and containers (a possible small meeting site).

Bill opened his beautiful studio to four interested guild members. Bill explained tools he used from heavy air-driven roughing tools to the finest point carving chisels. His sharpening techniques and how he became interested in wood carving at the age of 7. Since Bill now works mostly on consignment pieces, he apologized that he only had his just completed work, an Otter floating in a group of lily pads.

After a break for coffee and an apple Crumb cake provided by his wife, we returned to the studio and watched Bill demonstrate the use of his tools and were given the opportunity to practice some of these carving techniques.
Bill does have an extensive portfolio of his works that may be seen at [www.redshift.com/~oakleaves](http://www.redshift.com/~oakleaves) and has a book published entitled “High Relief Wood Carving.”

**Sharpening at Bob Couch’s Shop in Bow**

*By Peter James*

A group of six people met at Bob Couch’s shop to learn about different methods of sharpening. There were three different methods used. Bob Couch showed a method using a flat plate with sandpaper adhered to it to take the place of sharpening stones. This method is quick and the materials used are very inexpensive.

Levy Luck who is Tom McLaughlin’s assistant showed methods using sharpening stones, a more traditional approach. The final method presented was the use of the flat belt sharpening machine that Jon Siegel is promoting in his “Sharpening Revolution”. There is an article on Jon’s method in this issue of the “Journal”. Jon showed not only how quickly, but also how easily the flat belt system worked. Jon’s machine was developed for use with turning chisels, but he showed how it could be used for all kinds of cutting tools from plane irons to carving chisels as well as the original use, lathe turning chisels.

**Creek Farm**

*By Al Hansen*

The meeting at Creek Farm was attended by 25 people consisting of members, spouses and, much to my delight, a gentleman who did his PHD thesis on the Summer Colony at Little Harbor in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, and it’s Relation to the Colonial Revival Movement.

Creek Farm is an historic building located on Sagamore Creek. It was a perfect place to spend a perfect New Hampshire fall day. Pricilla Chellis, in keeping with the elegance of the setting, provided a fine tablecloth, flower centerpiece and home baked goodies, some in the shape of tools to go along with coffee. We ventured out to the spacious porch to view the incoming tide.

Creek Farm is leased to The Shoals Marine Lab, which is located six miles due east in the Gulf of Maine. The meeting started with a brief history of that relationship and two short films. Bob LaCivita then led us on a tour of the main building pointing out the many examples of fine woodworking. The highlight of the meeting was a visit to the music room, a fine example of Tudor Revival dominated by quarter-sawn oak, a giant fireplace and much fine carving.

Fred Chellis of Little River Windsors then told us of the volunteer restoration work he and his family had done. Fred also received commission from the Shoals Lab to restore several cracked panes of leaded glass. A very good time was had by all.
As Craftsmen, we work with wood for many different reasons. Some of us are drawn to its functionality and form, others to the escapism inherent in the process of conceptualization, design and completion of a work. But for many, it is the aesthetics of the final product and our pride resulting from a well-built article. The unique qualities of wood are integral to these motivations. Its warmth, strength, durability and beauty provide a medium for self-expression that can elevate it from mere craft to art.

In the crafting of stringed instruments, the most important property of the wood to be considered is its ability to create and carry tone. This property varies greatly and can be difficult to predict. Early in my apprenticeship, I was given the opportunity to compare the tonal quality of two top plates of an identical species that were of similar size and thickness. After determining which I thought was of higher quality, I was informed that both plates were from the same manufacturer and that I had chosen the piece that was less expensive by more than half. The wood had been valued utilizing a standard industry rating system that was based on aesthetics alone. Tone can vary greatly, even in wood obtained from the same source. I have liberated separate leaves from a single stock blank to find that while both were visually appealing and apparently identical, only one carried true pleasing tone.

There are some difficulties in discovering and then drawing out the property of tone in wood. While tone is inherent, it is not necessarily fixed and can be manipulated by ageing, shaping, bracing, construction and finishing. Each of these areas can enhance or deaden the tone of the final product, but it is the method and nature of initial discovery that we are addressing here. Most builders use one of two methods in the hopes of determining whether or not a leaf or plate may have the ability to produce the desired result. The first is an art, tried and true, passed on generation to generation and involves merely tapping the leaf or plate with a knuckle, while held vertical, to determine what sound it will produce. The trained ear hopes to hear a specific quality of vibration that may have subtle overtones that when produced, will match the builders intended vision and a desire for the particular instrument he or she intends to complete.

Tap tuning is more of an art form than a science. It requires the practitioner to develop significant experience and an educated ear. Its method is completely subjective and lacks significant documented teachable reproducbility, but it is by far the most commonly utilized method for discovering the tonal properties in a selected subject.

The second method, being the art of tap tunings

John Whiteside—Tap tuning
opposite, is a more scientifically based method referred to as the Chladnian (LAHd-knee-n) technique.

Ernst Florens Friedrich Chladni was a German of Slovakian decent, and lived from the 1700s to the early 1800s. Born into an educated family, Chladni was a physicist and musician and was better known for his discoveries and research into sound as it pertained to vibrating plates.

Known as the "Father of Acoustics," Chladni was best known for inventing a technique for discovering the modes of vibration on mechanical plates. Chladni would draw a bow over a metal plate to elicit a specific frequency which in turn would yield a particular pattern. Today, it is more common to utilize a speaker that’s frequency is more easily adjusted to create similar patterns. Some are of the opinion that these patterns help ensure reproducibility and therefore assist in the discovery of plates or leafs that may hold the sought after sound within them.

Given these observations it is not hard to understand the predicament large manufacturers of instruments face, attempting to discover piece-by-piece or leaf-by-leaf which individual plate may contain the properties best suited for superior tonal quality. Careful consideration of each product would yield such waste, overhead and excess manpower as to render the cost of the final product completely out of reach. Today’s manufacturers have successfully transitioned the consumer away from superior tone quality to compromise by placing an emphasis on visual aesthetics. Many manufacturers produce durable, playable, aesthetically pleasing reproductions that bring a great deal of pleasure to their owners. But to find a manufactured instrument that is not only durable, playable and aesthetically pleasing but also has superior tone quality, is quite rare indeed. For the individual builder, however, the search for tone locked deep within the wood is the primary objective.

I hope that this column has provided the reader with a view through a small window into the world of lutherie and the quest for tone. This discussion is by no means comprehensive, so if you would like to learn more about this subject or others concerning guitar building in general I would like to suggest the following:

Acoustics for Violin and Guitar [www.speech.kth.se/music/acviguit4/index.html]
Free Plate Tuning With Alan Carruth (DVD) [www.collinsguitar.com (Chladnian method)]
Voicing a Steel String Guitar by Kent Everett (DVD) [www.stewmac.com (Tap Tuning)]
Guitar Making Tradition and Technology/William R. Cumpiano (where ever fine books are sold.)

The Period Furniture subgroup met at Woodcraft Supply in Newington, NH on September 25th. As usual, the meeting was well attended with about 25 or so devotees of American Period Furniture.

John George was the featured presenter and he lead a very interesting discussion on making cabriole legs in the Queen Anne style. He discussed the particular methods that he utilizes in laying out and fabricating the legs. Following John’s presentation, long time Guild member and period furniture maker, Geoff Ames, showed flipcharts that describe in detail how he lays out cabriole legs to get the proper proportions. Geoff is the founder of the Guild’s Period Furniture Group and a noted NH maker of furniture.

Attendees also showed work in progress and recently completed work including an accurately scaled doll bed in period style produced by Bruce Wedlock.
Effects of the Recession on Woodworking

Both my business and many fellow woodworkers have been deeply affected by the current recession. Unlike in the late ’80s or ’90s, this one has hit extra hard. I have counted nineteen architectural woodworking companies in New England that have closed their doors. Half of these are large companies doing millions of dollars worth of business yearly, while the rest are small, like mine, with fewer than five people. This equals hundreds of layoffs.

My business is a combination general contracting and architectural woodworking business. The latter is a business that produces woodwork going into a residence or commercial space, such as doors, trim, cabinets, counters, stairs, specialty work and installation. In some cases, the work is given to a number of companies.

I have always looked at my company from a business point of view first. That is the cash flow, profit or loss or bottom line and overhead expenses. I have tried to be realistic, knowing that I was vulnerable to market shifts and changes. Both sides of my business follow the real estate market. A normal project for me starts when someone buys a new old house or fancy house and I upgrade it to change the style to suite the owners taste or repair problem areas. I usually had a combination of small jobs and anchor projects, projects lasting for months or years. I have always made it a point to do small jobs because they were the projects that got my business going. I never forgot that.

The housing bubble began to spring leaks about a year before the banking collapse in the fall of 2008. Housing prices began to fall. We all know what happened after the collapse. For me and many of my fellow woodworker/builders, it was as if a faucet had been shut off.

I had a project going at the time that had multiple phased items to build. A bathroom remodel, a kitchen counter, floors and exterior work added up to a good-sized project. I finished one item, the banking collapse happened and the owner stopped everything. The norm had been that projects usually grow, this had never happened, and now projects are few and far between.

People are apprehensive about spending money. I have talked with several colleagues and the scenario has been similar — the phone is not ringing, there are very few anchor jobs, and few small jobs with hundreds of businesses vying for them. Like most people without a crystal ball, I was not ready for this.

I got a break and received a custom house to build which took the immediate pressure off, but the question is, what happens when it is complete? I have been calling, writing and emailing potential clients. I thought of magazine advertising, but the cost was prohibitive.

Nothing happened. I had to get rid of my crew and I now work alone. Most of the summer I was under-employed, working two or three days a week or two weeks on and one week off. I spent much of my time contacting potential clients, which may be paying off now. One of my former crew is driving to Boston from Exeter daily to make a living.

I feel like I am starting my business over from the bottom. I am a glass-half-full person, but at times I get down about the situation. After severely adjusting my business approach, work is now coming in, but it takes three times as much effort to land one-quarter of the work I would have received in the past, and jobs and payments are delayed. This is time consuming and expensive, but some money is better than no money. One approach that is working is teaming with other cabinetmakers and builders. We are sharing work, using each other as skilled labor to make up for our lack of employees.

I do not see any upswing in the market. The real estate market is the barometer of the commercial woodworking industry, and right now the market is flat and only small inexpensive properties seem to be selling.

Like brakes and mufflers in the automotive repair industry, people are just maintaining their houses.
The Guild of New Hampshire Woodworkers

Roofers I know are steady, but upgrade woodworking is a luxury item to purchase. My family keeps me going. I pick up my grown children’s energy as they make lives for themselves. With all their excitement overflowing, I pick up the feeling and design furniture or rooms that may or may not get built. The design is the thrill for me.

With sawdust in my blood, I will keep plugging along. What else would I do? I do not think the faucet is going to turn on as quickly as it shut off. I do think it will be a gradual trickle and eventually a medium flow. Will we see boom days again? I suspect so. People have short memories. I will not predict when.

Recession continued

Behind The Scenes at a GNHW Steering Committee Meeting

The Guild of New Hampshire Woodworkers steering committee meets monthly in Concord to conduct the business of the Guild. President Bob LaCivita does a great job in managing the content and discussion within the scheduled two hours.

Prior to each meeting, Bob sends the members of the committee an agenda and Claude Dupuis, the Guild secretary, will have e-mailed the prior month’s meeting minutes. In addition to the steering committee members (gnhw.org/pages/resources_steeringCommittee.shtml), other members may be present to discuss agenda topics.

The November 17th meeting included a review of the Guild’s budget and finances. A sub-committee had met prior to the meeting to discuss the budget and Guild funding. Treasurer Peter James reported on account balances, cash flow and a forecast of spending and expenses. Bob LaCivita reported on the scholarship committee activities. Bob indicated that there was increased participation which pleased the steering committee.

There was an energetic discussion about content in The Old Saw and The Journal and how the two publications (one on-line and e-mailed, and one printed) serve different needs. The Old Saw is more the “newspaper” of the Guild and contains articles and information related to Guild meetings and activities and the many Guild sub-groups. While this information is often available on the Guild website and in the various Guild blogs, The Old Saw brings all of this information to one place. In this way, a member who is primarily a woodturner, still sees information about what is going on in other areas of the Guild. The Journal, the Guild’s printed publication, contains longer articles and is more a magazine than a newspaper. Printed and mailed three times a year, it does not contain time-sensitive information. Time sensitive information is contained in TouchUps, an email sent to members weekly.

The steering committee also discussed preparations for the upcoming Guild show at the New Hampshire Technical Institute. Long-term planning is always a part of the meetings and includes topics such as the Guild’s audio/visual equipment needs and how to plan and budget for the purchase of this equipment as our needs arise. As we enter 2011, discussions will increase about preparations for Sunapee and our annual participation in the League of New Hampshire Craftsmen’s fair.

The schedule for steering committee meetings is posted on the Guild website in the calendar (gnhw.org/pages/news_calendar.shtml) and the minutes of the steering committee meetings are posted at gnhw.org/pages/resources_scMinutes.shtml. Meetings are open to all members!

Recession continued

Behind The Scenes at a GNHW Steering Committee Meeting

By Roger Myers
O ur Guild kicked off its 21st year with the annual meeting at the Woodworking Shop in Dartmouth College in Hanover, NH. The Woodworking Shop in the Hopkins Center, a new venue for us, is one of a number of well-equipped craft shops, including Jewelry and Ceramics.

The day started with our traditional used “tool” auction, which included some beautiful woods for turning and furniture making and even an oilcan or two. John Siegel, our extraordinary auctioneer, did a first class job, and the resulting proceeds, amounting to $1,095.25, will benefit the Guild Scholarship fund.

Following the auction, our new slate of officers was elected by unanimous vote [see results elsewhere in this issue]. A couple of items of interest: we have gone international, with our first offshore member joining the Guild through the web from Australia [welcome!] and our raffle at the Sunapee Fair netted $9,580, also to benefit the Scholarship fund. Thanks to all who donated items for both the Fair and the Auction?

The featured speaker for our afternoon program was Cabinetmaker Dave Meyers, from Gilford, NH. Dave, who is self taught, started out making Shaker furniture, a style so clean and simple that Dave said it needs to be “perfect” to stand the test of time. Dave’s niche is to take an average piece and “push it over the top” so it “truly explodes.” He does this by embellishing the piece with beautiful veneers and inlays and careful finishing, and he spent the balance of the afternoon explaining and demonstrating how he accomplishes these objectives.

Dave makes extensive use of veneer and cuts most of what he uses from stock lumber. Since commercial veneer is usually on the order of $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch thick, there is little margin of error when using purchased veneers. Dave cuts veneer from green wood to a thickness of $\frac{3}{16}$ and stickers the layers in a weighted bag until dry. The veneer shrinks to about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch while drying, leaving plenty of stock for flattening and polishing to a final thickness of 0.055 inches.

Veneers are applied to solid core plywood that Dave fabricates from lumber that he cuts to 1x1 sticks and glues into a sheet. Veneer is attached to the core using a two-part Unibond glue and a vacuum bag. He had started out using yellow glue, but found that it will creep; additionally, due to the high water content, yellow glue can cause problems with shrinkage and, for thin veneers, migration to the surface through pores in the wood impacts the finish. He also has used hide glue. Whatever glue one uses, the layer should be minimal and a printer’s roller works well in getting just the right amount on the substrate.

Veneers can be finished with some coloring to “make ‘em pop.” He has tried a variety of coloring agents, from commercial dyes to Dunkin Donuts Iced Tea. In order to achieve consistent chatoyance* and color, he always uses veneer from the same “side” of the flitch – i.e. he slides the pieces off the flitch instead of reversing adjacent sheets as you would if you were “bookmarking” a pattern. He feels this makes for more uniform color, especially with crotch wood. If bookmarked patterns are called for, he coats the surface with a wash of hide glue, thinned 4:1 with water and dried overnight before applying the colorant.
Dave spoke about his philosophy and techniques for finishing his furniture, preferring a slick, polished finish for horizontal surfaces such as tabletops, and a more satin finish for other elements such as aprons and legs. He has used Tung oil, which he prefers over linseed oil [the wood will continue to darken over time with linseed oil] but now focuses on Epifane, a varnish popular with boat builders. He claims that Epifane has lots of solids, builds fast and does not change the tone of the piece. Due to the high solids content no fillers are necessary for porous woods.

Surface preparation consists of scraping and hand planning with razor sharp tools rather than sanding, so his finishes are applied “right off the tool.” His procedure involves a wash coat of Epifane [thinned 50% with Epifane’s proprietary thinner] followed by two finish coats of unthinned varnish. After allowing 2 to 3 days to dry thoroughly, he wet sands with 1000 grit paper and then polishes using Mirror Glaze. This is followed with 4/0 steel wool, lubricated with Wool Lube, to achieve the final surface desired.

In addition to veneer on the broad surfaces of furniture, Dave also embellishes furniture with small inlays to form petals, bellflowers, stringing and other features. He demonstrated how he creates petals by piercing a leg with a carving tool with a given sweep to create a hollow, and then using the same tool to cut a petal from a contrasting piece of veneer. To affix the petal to the leg, he makes use of the swelling of the wood caused by water based yellow glue to slightly swell the veneer, resulting in a tight fit around the periphery.

Dave concluded by showing samples of his work, which were quite stunning. His work is influenced by Shaker and Federal styles “Shaker is simply Federal without the decorations”. If you missed this meeting, you will want to borrow the DVD from the Guild Library to see and hear the entire presentation.

"Dave makes extensive use of veneer and cuts most of what he uses from stock lumber.

*An optical reflectance seen in some woods which offer different looks when struck by light at different angles.*
November 20, 2010

The second general meeting of the year was held at Scott and Barbara Reusswick’s shop in Canterbury. The meeting began with the introduction of Donald Briere, an accomplished segmented wood turner. The group was told his training in woodworking was a little different and quite intriguing: he studied woodworking in the New Hampshire Furniture Masters Association [NHFMA] outreach program while he was incarcerated in the Concord and Berlin state prisons.

Donald Briere speaks about his journey to woodturning

Don began by explaining the circumstances of his imprisonment, and then went on to explain the hobby craft program at the prison. He told how he qualified to participate in the program and was also able to attend many Furniture Master (FM) demonstrations and programs. He was later picked for participation in a limited, more intensive training program in the outreach program. Among the FMs to work with Don were Terry Moore, Tom McLaughlin and David Lamb.

Don explained that his background was in home building and that he was accustomed to working with measuring tolerances of an eighth of an inch. That got a reaction—more Guild members smiled at that than when saying “cheese” for the group picture at the summer picnic. Don then turned to gluing up in rings and other turning techniques in segmented turning.

Having explained that many things in the world changed while he served time, Don told us he was persuaded that home building was no longer a good career choice because of the housing slump. So (Don put it a different way) he turned to turning. He emphasized and credited his success to the support and exposure he got from the NHFMA, the League of NH Craftsmen, and members of our Guild.

After the first hour of the morning session, we had to cut off some questions and conversation to stay on schedule.

Terry Moore started the second morning session by giving us more background on the FM outreach program and their work with Don. Terry pointed out that they saw Don every few months and his instruction spanned about ten years. He added that Don had a luxury that most woodworkers do not—he had time to practice, practice, practice. With Don close at hand, Terry finished with some stories about their hanging out after his release and noted that things were working out well for him.

Terry Moore on the New Hampshire Furniture Masters

Terry also spoke about the recent FM’s auction from the maker’s point of view, and later about his own entry—a Carlton House desk. Terry started by explaining that the Furniture Masters, was founded in 1995 as a way to grow and develop a marketplace for the makers of very fine furniture in New Hampshire and the New England region. The auction provides exposure to those who buy furniture as fine art and is an opportunity for the makers to sell their work. It has been largely successful, and the September auction was its fifteenth.

The Furniture Makers take on some risk to participate
in the auction. Terry explained that the auction is unique. At other auctions the value of the items being sold can be determined or reasonably estimated. The work offered at auction by the FMs is by design unique, the desirability of the pieces is unclear and pricing is difficult. He summed up by saying a maker can work four months on a piece for the auction and it may not sell. That’s one quarter of their annual capacity, which can be one-fourth of their income for the year.

They do have ways to reduce that risk. Often they have buyers for their work should it not sell, but if the piece does sell, they will make another. Smiling, Terry went on to say that this, too, has a down side; the auction gives the makers an opportunity to make something they want to make, but when a buyer is involved, they must give up some of their artistic license.

**Business Meeting**

After Terry’s presentation Bob LaCivita began the business session by telling the members of a change in our membership process. Instead of having all new members renew their membership every August like all of us do, new members will renew their membership on the anniversary date as is the custom in many other organizations.

Treasurer Peter James reviewed the Guild’s finances, which he said were in good shape. Tony Immorlica said a few words regarding magazine subscriptions and book sales. Bob ended by telling the members there were no issues to bring forward at this time so we broke for lunch.

**Feature Presentation**

Terry Moore then showed a series of pictures, starting with the Carlton House desk he made for the auction. It was the same picture posted on the FM’s auction web page and the same one posted with the article on the Guild’s announcements page. It is a beautiful desk, so it was no surprise that Terry was asked to give a presentation on its design.

He continued by explaining the Carlton House name. Any desk with compartments on top of the writing surface can take the name of the first desk made for British royalty in the seventeenth or eighteenth century with compartments on top. Let me point out that Terry is from Wales, which is obvious when you hear him speak.

The next picture was described as a basic table, his first made in the mid ’70s. Next we saw the desk he made in the 1980’s. He told us of his growth in furniture making, adding veneers and curves and making it look more like a desk. It won Best of Show at Sunapee.

Next we saw the third generation of the desk, with fluted legs and more design changes. Terry explained that not all changes were good and that the fourth version had refinements made to the legs. He changed the look of the desk in the fifth, sixth, and seventh versions, but they were all still the same desk. The seventh desk is owned by the Currier Museum and is on permanent display there.

Terry then described the changes he made on the eighth version (shown), the most notable being the compartments on the top of the writing surface from which it got its name.

We expected Terry to take us through a detailed, precise and complex design process, but instead he showed us the process that many of us use — keeping at it, making the same basic piece better each time. He concluded by suggesting that our work, too, will evolve by keeping at it.

Hopefully, it won’t take 35 years.
This has been an exciting year for the Granite State Wood Turners with two firsts—our first place in the artistic category at the American Association of Woodturners (AAW) collaborative challenge and our exhibit at the New Hampshire Technical Institute.

In June, we as a group decided to build and enter our first AAW collaborative challenge. The hope was to get as many members involved as possible and work together as a team to build, if nothing else, a respectable project. There was no expectation of winning; after all it’s our first entry. Most of the members had never seen a challenge project let alone design and enter one. David Belser set our effort in motion with a “nested sphere concept” along with a Dimension Schedule (see table) and it took off from there. To our surprise we took first place in the Artistic category. Not too shabby for our first entry. The NHTI exhibit is one of many places the Club plans on displaying the spheres around the state. It was at Rockler Woodworking and Hardware in Salem for the month of Nov. and is at Woodcraft in Portsmouth for the month of Dec.

During the take down of the exhibit a woman passing through noticed the take down and stated “Oh, I’m going to miss looking at these”. It would seem, if nothing else, we at least pleased one person with the enjoyment of looking at fine wood turnings. As a participant, I too enjoyed looking at and admiring the works of others.

To many more firsts.
### Dimension Schedule

Turners had to work as a team to very precise dimensions in order for this project to work. David Belser had this very creative idea that he then developed into a workable concept and a schedule so the dimensions of each sphere were clearly documented. This allowed each turner to create a sphere that would fit perfectly so that the next smallest and largest would nest with it.

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**Spheres**

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In October of this year the GSWT were invited to participate in an exhibit at the New Hampshire Technical Institute in Concord NH. Eighteen members participated with a total of forty plus pieces on exhibit. We had the collaborative project on display which always draws lots of interest and questions. The exhibit opened with a reception on a night that poured cats and dogs. None the less many people did attend and it was fun explaining the exhibit pieces. One couple I had met at the Sunapee Fair while demonstrating was at the opening and it was surprise to see them there. One never knows how what we say and do will affect others. We can only hope that we, all of us, have inspired or will inspire someone else to try their hand at woodturning.
As you know it’s not just about the piece(s) but the story behind the piece. Below is an attempt to include “The Story” behind some of the pieces.

**Claude Dupuis of Canterbury, NH**

A Malcolm-Tibbetts-inspired stave vase made up of 133 pieces using quarter sawn cherry, ebony, maple veneer and black dyed veneer. This was definitely a challenge even greater than segmented work. Forget the math, wow. I used quarter sawn cherry with the hope of creating a linear vertical look.

**Stephen Carey of Hooksett, NH**

This was one of many projects with plywood and just messing around with different material and degree's of angle. This one was my favorite.
Tim Elliott of Newfields, NH

Piece was titled “volvox” because the chip-carving reminded me of the geometric texturing that arises on the surface of microscopic aquatic life.

Bruce Haskell of London, NH

I have recently been accepted by the NH League of Craftsman juried in the medium of wood. I will be displaying my work for sale in various locations throughout the state.

Most of the forms for my pieces come from the observations that I see in nature. These pieces are made of cocobolo. I love the beauty of the cocobolo due to the color and the grain variations. I use this quality of the wood to compliment the finished shapes of each piece. Each piece of wood is different and many hold unexpected surprises that reveal themselves as the shape evolves.
Bruce Haskell of London, NH

Square Mahogany Bowl — I was selling raffle tickets at the Sunapee fair and Dick Weiss pulled a huge chunk of what we thought was walnut out the back of his car. I was admiring it and he said 'you can have that if you want.' I replied that I would take it and make something out of it and give it back to him.

Tony Holmes of Salem, NH

The 'Button' — I got the idea from the AAW symposium. I saw a very similar item that was dyed red, and had to make one for the sewing room!
Tony Holmes of Salem, NH

Eccentric goblets — While looking for woodturning inspirations on You Tube I came across a video of someone making these. I didn’t have a 4-jaw chuck at the time but this gave me the ideal excuse to go get one – which I did that morning. After three attempts at the off-centre turning I got one of the goblets finished in one piece.

Tony Immorlica of Mont Vernon, NH

The maple log for this bowl/vase was felled in my backyard during a storm. My initial intention was to turn a closed form but upon roughing it out while it was still green I encountered a number of defects and pithy wood. By the time the undesirable wood was turned away the shape totally changed and I noted that the wood exhibited some very nice spalting. The inside shape was inspired by an exhibit I saw in the Museum of Science so I added a plug of black epoxy to the hollowed out neck on the inside of the object and I call it my “black hole.”

Gene Kopf of Meredith, NH

#1 RIPPLES is a maple bowl with clean vertical lines that make it easy to hold thread and scraps and yet it is small enough to sit near the work area. The grain reminds one of the ripples created when a stone is cast into quiet water. Diameter 5½”, Height 6”
#2 FANTASY is an inside-out turned Christmas tree ornament. The decorative center column is turned from black walnut. The shell is reverse turned from a glue-up of maple and cherry. The diagonal design is the result of turning at an angle to the pre-planned orientation of the vertical members. Since there is little strength at the cusps of the shell, it is the center column that gives the piece its rigidity. Diameter 3”, Height 6”

#3 TEXTURE is a bud vase with glass liner made of Southern Red Oak. The solid dark wood is enhanced with bold texturing. Diameter 4”, Height 6½”

Too many pieces is just that, over 1500 individual pieces of material. Oak, Ash, Cherry, Walnut and Ebony.
I’ve been making a series of music stands over the past few years. I made the first one from ash as a Christmas present for my oldest, flute-playing daughter. She uses it daily and loves it. For that first stand I used a brass rod that supported the music tray and ran downwards into the spindle. A smaller rod, it wasn’t too difficult to use a drill through the hollow tail stock of my Jet lathe and into the spindle, as one does for lamps. While that works fine, the rod’s appearance between the bottom structure and music tray didn’t please me aesthetically nor was it as steady as I would like. I considered using square stock for the rod, creating a dado in the turning by splitting the blank and gluing it back together using the brown, paper bag trick. But the square look bothered me and I didn’t like the idea of a seam, however innocuous, on the spindle.

Then I struck on the idea of using a ¾ dowel despite the challenges of drilling a deep hole that size into end grain. I used this method for the first two; I first used my Jacobs chuck with a drill bit, followed by a ⅜ spoon bit lamp auger through my hollow tail stock to create a pilot hole. Then I used a long twist drill to get closer to the size I wanted, followed by a Forstner on two long extensions to clean out the ¾ inch hole. To get this to work I actually put the extension on the lathe and sanded the connector bulges down with sandpaper. A little beeswax on the connectors, and they were sized to fit in the hole and keep the bit on track. That worked acceptably until the set screws let go of my Forstner bit at the bottom of the drilling process --- it’s still hopelessly wedged inside an otherwise fine-looking spindle. I’ve kept it in my shop and I remain open to ideas on how to get it out! A friend who’s in an informal weekly carving group with me, suggested that the whole thing should go in the freezer and then the metal would come loose from the wood—I still haven’t tried freezing it yet.

Now I use a simpler arrangement. After the ⅜ lamp auger, I take the tail stock off the lathe and put a spindle steady on the end furthest from the chuck, then, using a hammer drill with the hammer function off, I use a long ship’s auger like those used these days by electricians. The end grain would jam the bit if the screw were to pull the bit into the cut as usual, but the ⅜ pilot hole is enough to prevent the threads from getting a good bite.

I’m fond of Federal furniture, so it’s no surprise that several of my stands include stringing and inlay of segmented, veneer fans. This was the first stand in which I paired ebony with tiger maple. I like the simple contrast of the figured wood with the dark accents on the music tray and on the turned knobs for the tray angle adjustment pin and the height adjustment screw. The legs and turned spindle offer some curvaceous interest, while the maple and ebony tray is understated with little fanfare.
The Guild of New Hampshire Woodworkers

George Sanderson of Loudon, NH

This is a white oak bowl from the center of a big knot which was held together by sheer luck. It’s footless, which means it rocks around a bit—makes some people nervous—but I love the kinetic movement of bowls like this.

Claude Dupuis of Canterbury, NH

A Ray-Allen-designed segmented bowl made up of 297 pieces using curly maple, black limba, ziracote, Maple Veneer, black dyed veneer and turquoise. This was a challenge to make and I had my doubts midway through whether or not to continue. Through some patience and hard work I persevered. The end product was very gratifying. Ray, many thanks for the inspiration.

Claude Dupuis of Canterbury, NH

A segmented Jr. Gentlemen’s Ballpoint Pen made up of 99 equal sized pieces of ebony, maple and bloodwood. Getting equal length segments proved to be a challenge. It’s a tough 60 degree cut on the table saw. Watch the fingers and don’t stand directly behind the saw blade.
The Guild of New Hampshire Woodworkers

Participants without individual pictures but with great respect for their contributions with works we all aspire to achieve.

Richard Bachelder of Bristol NH
- Classic Lamp Base - Mahogany and gold leaf
- Turned Earring Box - Cherry burl and rosewood

David Belser of Penacook NH
- Top Pendants - Spalted Maple, Tulipwood, Lacewood

Marcel Durette of Manchester NH
- Wall Hanging - Red Oak
- Bowl - Ash

Robin Dustin of Sandwich NH
- Siblings - Ash, Ipe, Chestnut, Cherry, Curly Maple, Ebony, Mahogany, Spalted Maple, Walnut and Veneer
- Contemplation - Aged Butternut, Spanish Cedar, Mahogany, Black Dyed Veneer
- Viking Charger - Aged Butternut, Spanish Cedar, Black Dyed Veneer

Bill Frost of Wilmington MA
- Red Oak Bowl - Red Oak

Stephen Fillebrown of Hancock NH
- Decorative Small Cup - Birch
- Fluted Vase - Locust
- Plate - Cherry and Purpleheart

Tony Immorlica
- Bottle Stoppers - Walnut, Mahogany, Spalted Maple, Oak & Brazilian Cherry

Scott Ruesswick of Canterbury NH
- Celtic Knot Bowl - Yellow Birch, and Cherry

Joe Watts of Grantham NH
- Untitled - Ash Figure
- Untitled - Cherry Burl

Richard Weiss of Henniker NH
- Candle Sticks - Ebony and Maple
- Oak Vessel - Oak Crotch Wood
- Cherry Vessel - Cherry Burl with Mahogany Accent
- Mesquite Vessel - Mesquite
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