



NEWSLETTER

VOLUME VIII

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JANUARY 1990

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope that all of you had a fine Christmas and that Santa brought you that tool that you have been longing for. In case you missed it, the Guild Christmas Party lived up to the billing that Leonard gave it in the last newsletter. The food was truly outstanding!

The 1989 Toys For Tots Program was a great success. Many thanks to everyone who built a toy. Early in 1990 I would like to publish a set of guidelines for building safe toys. I have heard and read many conflicting instructions and think that an "official" guideline would be of help to us all. The Consumer Products Safety Council is probably the place to start. If anyone has information on how to obtain the latest set of government guidelines please let me know.

I just received the Winter 1990 issue of the Highland Hardware's "Wood News". They have an extensive list of seminars planned for 1990 covering a wide variety of subjects. Twenty four are scheduled in the first 5 months. They are a bit pricey, especially if you include transportation and lodging. I hope we can offer at least 2 here in Birmingham this year. I think we can equal Highlands quality and certainly beat the price.

Many of you watched Norm Abram's PBS television series "The New Yankee Workshop" last year. A new series will air in 1990 on Channel 10 beginning in March, probably on a Thursday night. Thirteen shows are scheduled. Channel 10 has promised to send me a schedule about 4 weeks in advance. We will publish the schedule in the Newsletter. I enjoyed the programs myself even though I don't agree with all of Norm's techniques. He does have some very practical ideas and if you aren't too much of a purist

you can always learn a few things from watching.

Gene Benitez has some very good ideas for programs in 1990. Stay tuned, I think you will like what's coming.

Jim Caldwell

JANUARY PROGRAM

"Safety in the Workshop", a subject we frequently try to push in the background because we all think of ourselves as the safest woodworker in existence. We are neglectful of covering our eyes, plugging our ears and protecting our lungs by wearing dust masks. Most of us don't want to think about these precautions much like we don't like to clean up our shops and the other non-fun aspects of having a shop. Well, don't despair. There is help on the way. The son of our own Ethel Owen (the basket lady), Dr. John Owen, an Ophthalmologist is going to bring us our program, a program that is way overdue. This might be a program to which you would like to bring an interested guest, and who knows, the guest might like us enough to apply for membership.

CHRISTMAS PARTY - 1989

It is amazing what a wonderful time a group of woodworkers and their wives and families can have when the prospects for a scrumptious meal and distribution of fabulous prizes and gifts are in the offing. All of these things took place when our party was held at the Helena United Methodist Church. We do

appreciate the church making their recreation hall, complete with kitchen, available to us for this the third year. To describe the spread of covered dishes is impossible. The variety of meat dishes, vegetables, salads, desserts and bread and drinks makes our party each year most memorable. After enjoying the meal, the group, consisting of about 100 of us, engaged in a Christmas song and carol singing accompanied by Sue Acton and led by Leonard Sanders. Following the singing, President Brooks began the unwinding process for his tenure by introducing the incoming officers and directors. At this time it seemed the appropriate time to recognize Nelson for his two years of hard work with and for the Guild and his devoted leadership. He was presented with a token of our appreciation in the form of a Makita Belt Sander. Then, after having served as Treasurer since the beginning of time, Walter Barnett was recognized for his attention to the finances of the Guild all these years by the offering of a gift of a Makita Belt Sander. We appreciate these men and the contribution they have made in making our Guild the outstanding organization it has become.

Ron and Sue Acton have been the Guild's most ardent supporters all down through the years. We appreciate their permitting us to meet in their wonderful plant and hold our classes of instruction there each week. To top all of that, they brought an unbelievable assortment of tools and accessories to the party which were distributed by drawings. There were portable power tools, measuring and marking devices, stains and varnishes, clamps, chisels, and many other items too numerous to mention. The Guild and its members express their appreciation to Acton's for their support and encouragement

of the Guild and hope the association never comes to an end.

The final chapter of the 1989 Toys For Tots was written at the Christmas party. The final tally of delivered toys was 771 — a few short of our goal, but about a 20% increase over 1988. Ben Neighbors completed two years as chairman of this our annual community project, and one of which we can justly be proud. We were invited to bring some of the toys to the broadcast booth of Channel 13 at the Galleria earlier in the week and received the thanks of Channel 13 since they were actively promoting Toys For Tots this year. We appreciate Ben staying on our tails to first of all make the toys and then to bring them in. The drawing for the prizes for those who made the toys was exciting. There were some 20 or 25 prizes to draw for, and those whose names were drawn received the tool or whatever gratefully. We look forward to more of the same next year.

LIBRARY

This is an attempt to update the information in the October newsletter in which there were listed several woodworking magazines the Guild has been in touch with. Some were given credit for honoring our requests, and some were listed as having rejected our requests. To try again to inform you, we wrote to six nationally distributed magazines asking them to grant us permission to copy tips and/or articles from their magazines as "fillers" in our newsletter. Usually, we don't have enough material in the way of news or information to fill all the space in our newsletter, and as a service to our Guild members "filling" the rest of the space with shop tips seems like a good idea. The we also asked the publishers for a complimentary subscription to their magazine to be placed in our library for use by our members. Then came a letter from the publisher of POPULAR WOODWORKING magazine admonishing us for not having invited them (as one of the

Alabama Woodworkers Guild Newsletter is published monthly for its members and other interested parties. Guild meetings are held monthly on the second Thursday at 7:00 P.M. at Acton Moulding & Supply Co. Information concerning the Guild may be secured by writing P.O. Box 506, Helena, Al 35080 or calling the Editor, Leonard Sanders, at 822-6876.

popular magazines with woodworkers) to participate in our program of reprinting and subscriptions. They (Popular Woodworking) granted permission for reprints and gave us a complimentary subscription too. They also invite articles from woodworkers for use in their publication. We have on file the guidelines they require for written articles which may be seen upon request. Popular Woodworking may be subscribed to by writing to them at 1320 Galaxy Way, Concord, CA 94520. As it stands now, the following magazines have responded to our request:

FINE WOODWORKING	Permission to reprint and subscription.
POPULAR WOODWORKING	ditto
WOOD MAGAZINE	ditto
WOODSMITH	ditto
WOODWORKER'S JOURNAL	ditto
AMERICAN WOODWORKER	Both requests denied

If any of our members are interested in subscribing to any of these magazines they may get the mailing address from the newsletter editor.

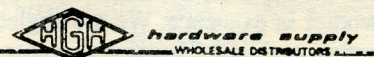
MEMBER RECOGNITION

It hasn't been long since one of our members was mentioned in a complimentary way in the newspaper. Now comes one of our members who has been noticed in the Golden

Nugget, the News Bulletin of the Golden "K" Kiwanis Club of Tuscaloosa. Our member is Frank Ryerson (who travels the farthest to get to our meetings) who was described as a craftsman who enjoys making wooden toys for the Toys For Tots program. It is nice to hear about the activities of some of our members besides the Guild.

ANNUAL DUES

Sorry to have to bring this up but it is dues time again. However, this doesn't seem to be viewed by our membership as a burdensome undertaking. We all recognize the Guild can't operate without funds. No one has ever suggested that there is a better bargain anywhere than the \$20.00 in dues we pay for our membership. It should be stated right here that we couldn't get by on that little amount were it not for the generosity of Ron Acton in letting us hold our meetings and classes in his plant. Since we don't have rent or heating and air conditioning to pay we can get by on our present dues structure. Out of the dues comes the expense of the newsletter, monthly door prizes at the Spring Show and at Christmas. It is appropriate, and required, that members pay their annual dues in January of each year. Please come prepared to tender your payment to our new Treasurer, Kerry McCalla (the antique tool man) at the January meeting, but should it not be possible to attend this meeting you may mail your payment to Kerry at the address shown in the newsletter.

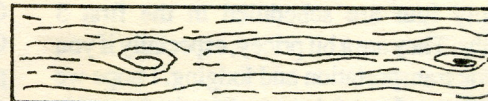


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Talking Shop

PLYWOOD FOR JIGS

■ One question that comes up frequently is what material to use to make jigs. Most of the jigs in our shop are made out of plywood. Plywood is flat, consistent in thickness, and dimensionally stable — ideal for jigs.

SOFTWOOD PLYWOOD. Almost everyone has some softwood (fir or pine) plywood left over from a building project. It's so readily available and inexpensive, that it's tempting to use it for jigs.

But softwood plywood has so many voids in the inner plies (layers) that the edges aren't very smooth. On a jig you want smooth edges for workpieces to run against or to act as stops.

A second problem is that the face veneers are often covered with knots, defects, and raised grain. It's difficult to push a workpiece over such a surface.

HARDWOOD PLYWOOD. The alternative is to use plywood with a harder face veneer. Most of the jigs I've built are made from 3/4" birch or maple plywood. Both of these are clean and relatively void-free. But they can be expensive. Unless you have some scrap left over from a project, it's expensive to buy it just for jigs.

Currently, a local home center sells 3/4" birch plywood for \$34.99 a sheet as opposed to \$18.99 for softwood plywood.

BALTIC BIRCH. You might have noticed that the jigs shown in this issue are made from a special kind of hardwood ply-

wood — Baltic Birch from the Soviet Union. This is what I consider a "Cadillac" material for building jigs. (Before going on, let me say that these jigs do not have to be built from Baltic Birch. Any plywood will work.)

Baltic Birch plywood is built up of many thin (about 1/16" thick), consistent layers of veneer. The 18mm-thick (about 3/4") Baltic Birch is made up of thirteen layers versus seven layers for 3/4"-thick American plywood, see photo. This makes the edges clean enough to use as a finished edge on some projects.

The white birch face veneers are slightly less than 1/16" thick, but considerably thicker than on American hardwood plywood. This allows for some additional sanding on the surface.

"Baltic Birch is a unique product consisting of one piece face and inner plies," explains Mark Aquino, of Allied International, the sole importer of Baltic Birch since 1967. "It's virtually void-free. You won't hit a seam or knot, and the multi-ply edge gives it a decorative appeal."

APPLEPLY. About four years ago States Industries of Eugene, Oregon started manufacturing an American version of Baltic Birch called ApplePly.

Bill Powell, Market Development Manager explains that since they were competing with Baltic Birch they would sell their product to be "as American as

ApplePly" (hence the name).

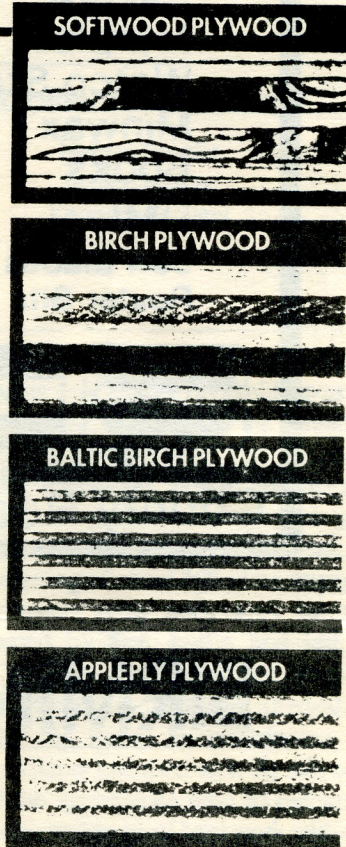
ApplePly consists of 1/16"-thick core veneers of western red alder (not apple). For the face veneers, States Industries offers just about any domestic hardwood (most commonly maple and birch) in typical 1/32" (or less) thickness.

DIMENSIONS. Since Baltic Birch is imported, its dimensions are metric. Thicknesses range from 3mm (about 1/8") to 18mm (about 3/4"). And the sheet size is unusual to Americans — 5 feet by 5 feet. ApplePly's dimensions are familiar — 1/4", 3/8", 1/2", 5/8", and 3/4" thicknesses and 4 x 8 foot sheets.

PROS AND CONS. The advantage of both products is the large number of thin laminations of solid clear veneers. This makes the edges clean and the panels strong and stiff (especially after dadoes are cut in them). They also hold screws better than standard plywood.

The large number of layers also creates a few disadvantages. When you get that many layers in a panel, you might get some movement (warp) in the panel. I've had problems with both of these products warping, especially in thinner thicknesses. (But not much more than is typical of any thin standard hardwood plywood.)

In the manufacturing process it takes a long time to lay up all those layers, so the price is



higher. Locally, a 3/4"-thick sheet (5 ft. x 5 ft.) of Baltic Birch sells for \$57.60 (\$2.30 a sq. ft.). A sheet (4 ft. x 8 ft.) of ApplePly sells for \$68.00 (\$2.12 a sq. ft.). This compares to \$1.09 a sq. ft. for standard birch plywood.

AVAILABILITY. Baltic Birch and ApplePly aren't available at every lumber yard. But both are distributed nationwide and can be found at some retail outlets.

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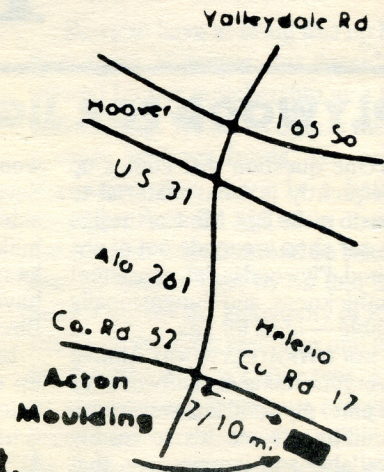
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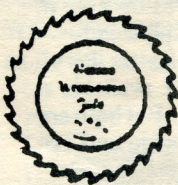
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