

NEWSLETTER

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JANUARY 1991

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope that everyone had a joyous holiday season. I want to thank all the toy makers for the fantastic production run. We had a record number of toys — the official count was about 3 shy of 1000. The quality and quantity were truly outstanding. I just received an exciting letter from Ronny Acton — he will be donating to the guild 5% of the value of our purchases at Acton's during 1991! This should help us bring in some first class seminars and programs. The Guild owes a great debt to Ronny for his consistent outstanding support.

There will be a Spring show this year. We are looking for a suitable site now. I would like to know how the members feel about a mall type show versus a location like the South Central Bell Headquarters lobby. A mall show would be shorter, probably 3 days. Traffic would be much higher and a broader "public" would be able to see our work. Another possibility would be one of the other downtown buildings such as the AMSOUTH-Harbert lobby. In either case security will be a problem so we would have to have people on duty all day and a place to lock up at night. What type show location do you prefer? Let me or any of the officers know how you feel.

Time now to start planning your project for the show. Of course I don't have the slightest idea what I will try this time — but I am thinking about it.

See you at the January meeting.

Jim Caldwell

NEXT MEETING JANUARY 10, 1991 • 7:00 P.M.

Something different has been arranged for us. Some years ago we were introduced to CANING, but we probably have forgotten all about it. Ken White, owner of HOOVER STRIP SHOP is going to demonstrate caning. Mr. White has a furniture stripping and refinishing business and as a result is highly qualified to speak on refinishing and refurbishing. The caning of chairs is an ancient craft but one most of us don't enter into voluntarily. Of course the "cording" of chairs is similar and will be demonstrated as well. Let's make Ken welcome by turning out a large attendance.

MAN OF THE YEAR

It didn't come as much of a surprise when the name of the 1990 Man of the Year was announced. In addition to announcing his name it was revealed there was no contest, it was a hands-down complete full blown win for our incoming Vice-President for 1991 — DALE LEWIS. Dale is an enormously talented artist. Yes, artist. He not only is a superb woodworker, he is a designer. Those pieces he brings to the meetings for Show and Tell weren't taken from a book or picture, they were conceived in his fertile brain and transcribed first, to paper, then to wood. We can take a lesson from him in that we probably have a design inspiration on occasion but don't follow through with a finished product, but when Dale has an

inspiration his thought first turns to what kind of wood would best fulfill the image created in his mind. We are sure the unanimity of our vote for Dale sprung from the uniqueness, as well as expertness, with which his work is created. We hail Dale for a deserving honor heaped upon him and look forward to many more years of association with him.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

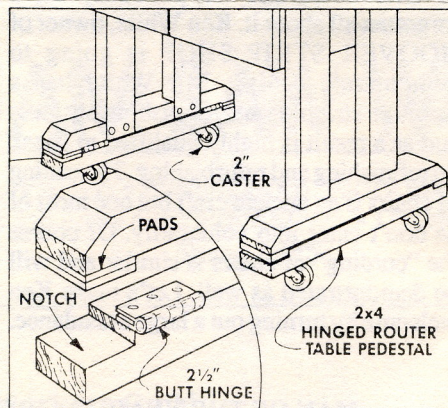
Upon arrival at the Helena United Methodist Church around 5:50 p.m. on the appointed day we were greeted with a huge room all ready for us. Some of our wonderful ladies (mostly ladies) had spent considerable time setting up folding tables and chairs, put table cloths on the tables and set up the food tables. All ready, at this time, the food tables were nearly full of meats, vegetables, casseroles, salads (of every description), desserts, sweet and unsweet tea, and coffee. Someone had secured the plates, forks, knives and spoons plus napkins. Now things like this don't just happen. Things like that are done by people, and we have the best people in the world when it comes to doing and getting things done. Sue Acton is the lovely lady who was the moving force this year as well as in prior years. This has to be the best Christmas party yet. There were more members present than ever before. The food was absolutely outstanding — a sentiment expressed by everyone. You ladies reached into your recipe books and boxes and brought in a truly memorable

ACTON SERVICSTAR

Your officers and directors, once again, want to thank Ronnie for his hospitality in furnishing us with such a great place to hold our meetings. Not only is it in an atmosphere of wood and woodworking, but it has the tools and supplies we all need and the convenience of picking up our supplies on meeting nights is an added benefit. Now comes Acton's with the letter we all received right at Christmas. The generous offer to donate 5% of Guild members' purchases to the Guild for the purpose of financing seminars is just another fine benefit of meeting at Acton's. So now, in addition to being grateful for the meeting place provided us by Acton's we can add the monetary benefit associated with our purchases. Thank you, Acton Servistar and we appreciate you.

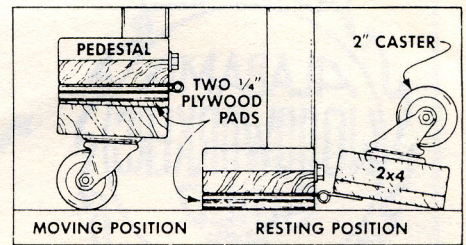
MACHINES ON WHEELS

Like many home woodworkers I have more tools than space. By mounting some of the larger machines on casters I'm able to roll them into position when I need them and out of the way when I don't. The problem was that I didn't want to work on machines raised up high on rolling or lock-down casters, and I couldn't easily adapt the expensive retractable casters to many of my large machines.



I designed a simple "flip-down" system that works great on my router table and could be adapted to other machines. I mounted 2" casters to two pieces of 2x4 and then hinged the 2x4's to the pedestals of the router table. When the table is in use the casters are kicked inward and the feet rest firmly on the ground.

I designed the system to fit on my Woodsmith router table that has 1/4" plywood pads at the ends of the pedestals. But as I was mounting the hinges, I discovered that the thickness of the hinge knuckle has to be less than the thickness of the pads or the table will rest on the hinges. Since the 2 1/2" butt hinges I used were too thick, I added an extra piece of 1/4" plywood to each of the pads to allow clearance.



Before the 2x4's are mounted, wide notches are cut on both ends. This allows the 2x4's to clear the pedestal pads when they're flipped into position.

*Harold S. Bourgoin
Bellevue, Washington*

COLOR CODING

While I'm adjusting equipment in the shop, I've always found it frustrating to grab the wrong wrench. I've solved the problem by using a color coding system.

I bought a variety of small bottles of bright colored enamel at a hobby shop. Then I color-coded the nuts and bolts by size to match the color painted on the same size wrench. For example, the 1/2" wrench has a red stripe on it and all the 1/2" nuts and bolts on my machines have a red dot on them.

This method is especially useful if you have more than one size chuck key or router wrench in the shop. The few minutes it takes to paint on the stripes and dots saves time and frustration later.

*L.D. Fredrick
Aspen, Colorado*

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.



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A STORY TO PONDER

Most of us go about our daily lives blithely, giving little thought to what we would do if we became disabled or infirm. Don Blackburn sent this article to us suggesting it might be of interest and inspiration to the Guild members. Thank you Don, and here it is:

80-year-old woodworker doesn't let blindness stand in his way

Clifton, Ill. — The spinning drill bit bites into soft pine an inch from Ed Beherns' left index finger, finding its mark safely over and over.

His skill in creating wooden toys would be remarkable for anyone, but Beherns accomplishes his work without seeing what he's doing. The 80-year-old craftsman is blind.

There is no hint that he can't see his work in the finish wooden tractor-trailer trucks, the small railroad steam engines,

the pickup trucks, wheelbarrows and wooden animals he builds in his basement shop.

"I know just about where everything is — unless somebody moves it," said Beherns, who moves gracefully through the narrow and twisted passages in his workshop where the musty smell of cedar and the spicy aroma of freshly worked pine fill the air.

He says he finds joy building toys, children's rocking chairs, tables and doll cradles. He sells his work, but only for enough to cover his expenses.

And he looks ahead to new challenges.

In his mind lives the blueprint for a working steam threshing machine — a scale model of the one his brother, Harry, used to own. It will be 18 inches long and an alcohol burner will make the steam.

The thresher will be metal and Beherns will use the metal-working skills he developed during a 31-year career at a Kankakee factory.

He started working with wood 10 years ago, shortly after he began losing his sight

to glaucoma. A blind craftsman from Champaign visited him and suggested he try building bird houses.

Now Beherns has a long waiting list of people who want his custom-built bird houses to give as holiday gifts.

His interest in toys originated a bit earlier, when he was growing up on a farm in Illinois.

"When I was a kid — you know there wasn't too much money in those days — I used to make my own toys," he said. "I made trucks — a whole construction outfit. Even a crane. And I made a Caterpillar tractor and put an alarm clock (mechanism) in it to drive the thing."

His blindness makes him an even better toymaker, because now he feels the contours and tests the smoothness of finished surfaces with hands made extra sensitive by his lack of sight.

"Before," he says, "I'd only look at the pieces."



Blind Toymaker

Ed Beherns, 80, of Clifton, Ill., may be blind, but there is no hint of the handicap in the large wooden toys he makes in his basement shop, some of which surround him in his home recently. "I know just about where everything is--unless somebody moves it," say Beherns of his work area. He sells the creations for just enough money to cover his costs.

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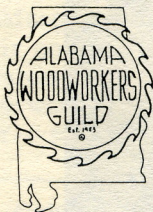
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