

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME IX NUMBER 9 SEPTEMBER 1991

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I am sure that by now you have heard me talk of Jack Harich, the Atlanta craftsman, designer and builder of fine hardwood furniture who will lead a group of seminars for us in October. I thought I would use this space to tell you a little about Jack and what he will be telling, showing and helping us do in the seminars. Jack's work is mostly done on commission. His style is characterized by hand shaped hard and soft lines. He often uses rounded dovetails that contain decorative laminations. He uses solid unstained domestic hardwoods for most of his furniture.

Jack teaches a series of small size (3 to 4 students) classes in his shop/studio each year. The two day dovetail course he will be teaching for us is one of his regular classes. Jack will start with a thorough discussion of dovetail theory, design and use and illustrate with some of his pieces. Students will have the opportunity to practice several different methods including using hand cutting, router jigs, bands saw, chisels, and pocketknife.

We have space for several more in the October 19-20 session. Sign up, I think you will find it a fascinating weekend while improving your skills.

During the Saturday October 12 one day seminar Jack will discuss his design and construction and finishing techniques. Jack builds some incredible furniture using

shop tools that are found in almost every wood workers inventory.

See you at the September meeting.

Jim Caldwell

NEXT MEETING SEPTEMBER 12, 1991 • 7:00 PM

Vice-President Dale Lewis has secured the services of James Carmichael, Selma, Alabama. Now, this is no ordinary woodworker — this is an experienced craft woodworker as well as maker of porch swings and other outdoor furniture. (Some of you will remember one of our members made and offered for sale for Toys for Tots a porch swing the year we exhibited at the Harbert Center downtown. We think the swing went for \$50 and was one of the few pieces that sold). James doesn't just fool around with small craft shows either. He is just back from New York City where he entered one, and sometime previous to that he entered one in Kentucky. There is more that could be reported, but we believe you get the message that James is one program you don't want to miss. We appreciate his driving as far as from Selma, also.

LAST MEETING • AUGUST 1991

We were intrigued with the ability of Robert Long, Boaz, Alabama to take willow from the swamps and creeks and turn it into serviceable and attractive furniture and other crafts. For instance,

take a twig about as large in diameter as a pencil (maybe a little larger), drill the proper size hole to accommodate a pencil or ball point pen. He says he sold three hundred at a craft show recently at \$3 a piece and could have sold more had he had them. He makes dressers (\$2,500) and sold one to Dolly Parton; Settee (\$800); medium size round table (\$600); hanging mirrors (\$80 to \$110); Bird Houses (\$23 to \$70). From that you may see this can be an interesting and profitable business. Mr. Long shared some other "need-to-know" facts we should keep in mind if we care to give willow bending a try. If the willow is cut in the Spring, wait two weeks to start bending; if cut in summer it may be bent immediately. Willow may be cut year round and usually is found around creek beds. He finds his willow in many places. He may be driving along a road and see it growing by a creek so he stops at the nearest house, hoping to find the owner and get permission to cut it. Most people are glad to get it cut and for him to have it, whereas others see an opportunity to charge him for it. Robert says you don't have to start worrying about whatever is made of willow until after 40 years; that there is very little shrinkage due to the bark being left on; and it may be painted or finished with polyurethane. Thank you, Robert Long.

As a postscript to this report, we learned after the program on willow bending that one of our members, Bill Battle, has two bent willow tables he made in the mid-1930's and they are still sound and the bark is still in place.

We had an unusually good group of members who shared with us some of their handiwork. They were as follows:

- | MEMBER | ITEM SHOWN |
|-----------------|--|
| Dale Lewis | End Table. If you are familiar with Dale's work, you know he names everything. The table has three shapely women's legs and has been aptly named, "Ruby, Don't Take Your Legs To Town". It is a lovely table. Then he had a turned bowl that included some red shoelaces Xing their way up one side of the bowl. |
| Charles Brown | Woodturning Lathe. What, you say? Yes, just that. It measures some two inches high, some four inches long and is powered by the movement of a music box. A splendid piece. |
| Jesse Whitfield | Bowls. Small, but very nice, and the bark has been retained on them. They were made of cherry. |
| Mike Healy | Magazine Library. This most useful appliance has dowels running left to right and the magazines are threaded on the dowels. It looked to measure fifteen to eighteen inches across and will hold a year or two of magazines. |

We appreciate these members bringing these items to the meeting and hope it will encourage the rest of you to follow suit.

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.

A couple of things that need to be reported, and we hope anytime any of you have news that should be reported to the membership you will let us know. At the July meeting it was reported that Pauline Morris had won the door prize. A terrible mistake was made there — her name is actually Pauline LARGE. We are glad to make that correction. Then, we have just learned that long-time member, Charles Alexander underwent a liver transplant earlier this year. In fact, two transplants since the first one was rejected. We are glad to report Charles is doing fine now and are glad to have him back.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Secretary-Treasurer, Roy Bates, submits the following:

July 1, 1991 Beginning Balance		\$3,729
Receipts, July 1991	\$141	
Disbursements, July 1991	<u>309</u>	
July 31, 1991		<u>\$3,561</u>

If you think we are the only Guild in existence, you are very wrong. There are many of them, and while we don't have a list of them there appears to be one in most of the large cities and many of the small cities. Your Guild receives Newsletters from quite a few of them, and it is interesting to read how these fellows in Michigan, California, Oklahoma, Georgia, Florida, though they may be Yankees or Westerners, have the same degree of enthusiasm we have here. We mail our Newsletter to quite a few of them, too. The largest Guild we know of is the San Diego Fine Woodworkers Association in, where else but San Diego, CA. This group has 675 paid-up members as of July, 1991. There are statistics that could be related about some of the others we hear from, but suffice it to say they are having as much fun doing their thing as we are. It may be of interest that we aren't the only Guild that participates in Toys for Tots either. Most of them participate in a similar program even though the name of the program may be a little different. Most of them have a general social party of some kind where the families can get better acquainted. They swap tools, sell unneeded tools to each other, usually have a source of materials at a discount (as we do at Acton's), have monthly meetings with programs designed to improve the knowledge of woodworking. We haven't detected any of them having a library, such as ours, but then they may not promote theirs as we do. All of this is said to let you know there is much going on all over the country, so much so you might want to look up a Guild wherever you may be traveling or visiting and attend their meeting.



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Not on your life. You probably have been wondering when we would begin our TOYS FOR TOTS campaign, well it is right now. There can be no undertaking we engage in that is more important than this program to benefit boys and girls who would not have any presents for Christmas if we didn't do the thing we do so well — MAKE TOYS. If you thought we might have a different Chairman/Toys For Tots than the one who has done such a superb job the last two years, you are wrong. Ben Neighbors has graciously accepted the chairmanship again and that means we will have a successful program again this year. We haven't talked to Ben, but since he had a goal of 1,000 toys last year, and we almost made it, we know he won't back off that figure. There are at least a dozen "How To Make Toys" books in the book section at Acton's. Get one of them. You don't have to confine your toymaking just to Christmas; think of your children, grandchildren or neighbor's children. They all like and enjoy toys year-round. So get moving — make 15 toys each and we will easily reach last year's goal and at least equal this year's.

Losing your nerve

It's not supposed to happen. Serious woodworkers don't take chances and they don't get hurt. Right? Wrong!

It was a lazy Saturday afternoon in the park, and I was enjoying that annual ritual known across the nation as the "company picnic." Lunch was over. The kids were terrorizing the park, and a number of grown-ups were sitting around relaxing.

I am an amateur woodcarver, and I'm pretty serious about what I do. I had been working on a myrtle belt buckle as a gift for the husband of one of my employees. The piece was about finished, but I was cleaning up a few rough places with a small skew chisel. I was anxious to show off the completed work, and so I rushed it a little.

Snap! The edge of the buckle gave way and the chisel went straight to the bone at the base of my right-hand index finger. Call it instinct or reflex, but the chisel was on the ground and the thumb of my left hand was on the wound before I realized what had happened. Within a minute, I was lying on a bench feeling a little dizzy; I lay there until someone realized I needed help.

We headed straight for the nearest hospital. The 45-minute ride and the lack of feeling in my finger brought me no comfort. The bowl of ice I had my hand in looked like strawberry jello. I knew that I had done something terrible to my hand.

Several months ago we reported the death of our late member, Bob Harfst. Mrs. Harfst has asked us to consider buying the tools Bob left her, and since she is going to move from her present location she needs to dispose of the tools. She will stay at home from 9:00 to 3:00 on Saturday, September 14th (that's the Sat. following our next meeting.) Her address is 2506 Hamilton Circle, Pelham. You turn off Hwy. 31 at Shoney's and head down that way. For better directions, call her at 663-2921. Here is what she has, thanks to Bob Minor who inventoried the shop: All tools are Sears except an AMT Scroll Saw and B & D Workmate. The others are: 10" table saw (outdrive) with eight accessories; 10" Band Saw; Drill Press; 1 HP Router with router table; Belt Sander; Circular Saw; Sabre Saw; 6 piece spring clamp set; 3/8" Drill; and a 4 piece set of Forstner Bits. If you can use any, or all, of these tools help Mrs. Harfst out by taking them off her hands.

Once the bleeding was controlled, the doctor began probing my finger with a pin. "Well, you did it," he said. I was informed that I had clipped the radial nerve leading to my right index finger. Stitches were next and then came the most troubling news: There was no way to repair the damage. The finger would remain numb.

Fortunately, when I returned to the hospital a few days later to have the wound inspected and the stitches removed, the young doctor who removed the stitches had a different diagnosis. She referred me to the hospital's hand clinic, and the doctors there said they could repair the damage.

The required surgery was quite an experience. A tight-fitting rubber cuff was applied to my wrist to stop the flow of blood long enough to repair the nerve and stitch things back together. The incision site was numbed by several injections at the base of my index finger, and then a drape was placed between my line of vision and my extended right hand.

The repair was done under a special microscope, which allowed the two surgeons to see the incision at the same time. One held the severed nerve ends together, while the other stitched. Three tiny stitches and less than an hour later the job was done. I kept my hand in a sling to position it above my heart for a few days, and then it was back to normal.

It has been almost five years since the surgery, and although I still do not have full feeling in my finger, most of it is back. It has taken time. For the first two years, I could not pick up small parts between my thumb and index finger. The flat pick that I used to play the guitar kept falling on the floor, and I didn't even feel it slip out of my grasp. The worst is over, and I see (feel) some improvement even now.

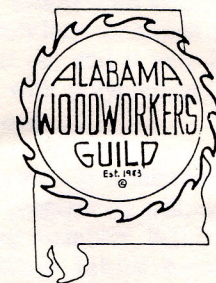
The Taunton Press, publishers of *Fine Woodworking*, is coming out with a new book entitled THE WORKSHOP BOOK. It will be available around the middle of September 1991, and will cost \$34.95. If you have any idea you may want to establish a larger shop or rearrange your present one, this book is for you.

I hope this story will help a number of fellow woodworkers. The obvious lesson here is the issue of safety. Familiarity seems to breed contempt even when working with dangerous power tools, let alone a chisel. It takes a great deal of discipline to continue working in a safe manner for long periods of time. Increased skill seems to bring along the notion that increased risk is a tolerable option. Most accidents can be prevented, but only if we are convinced of the danger and take action.

And what about the "true" accident? Odds are, many of us are going to have one. My reaction was certainly not predictable. Even though I didn't have a life-threatening injury, I experienced mild shock and most certainly needed assistance. How many times have you headed for the shop with no one else around, absolutely certain that there would be no accident and that if by chance there was, you could handle it? Are you ready for that accident? Do you have any first-aid resources available? These should include equipment (adequate first-aid kit), people (it's hard to dial a phone with no fingers) and a plan (what to do and where to go for emergency treatment).

Lastly, follow-up health care requires no less attention than accident prevention and first-aid resources. Suppose you do your best to prevent injury, but still have an accident. Even if you do have first-aid help available, will you know what the next best step is? Certainly you can't go wrong hotfooting it to the nearest emergency-treatment facility. But what happens after that? I got two different diagnoses, and it was just a fluke that

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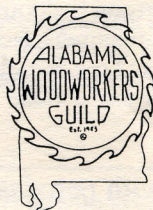
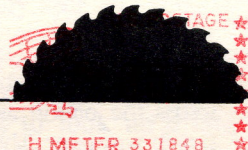
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