

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME X NUMBER 2 FEBRUARY 1992

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Inclement weather prevented our January guest speaker from attending, however, in his absence Dale Lewis quickly put together a quality group of folks with some interesting woodworking information. Thanks to everyone that filled in the speakers' absence. We have many talented members in the Guild and I am looking forward to our being able to hear from more of them at some future time.

I asked in the January newsletter about your thoughts and suggestions for some Saturday morning educational seminars. I have heard from only one person about his, however, let's have one more crack at the topic before we drop it. Let any board member hear from you about your suggestions.

It was suggested that the Guild construct a coat and hat rack for the meeting room that we used for our Christmas party at the Helena Methodist Church in lieu of the customary contribution of one hundred dollars. I am happy to report that Frank Jones has designed, constructed and delivered the coat rack to the church. Frank is an asset to the Guild and a woodworker that we can all try someday to be as good as. Thanks Frank.

The location and timing of the Spring Show continues to occupy my thinking. Nelson Brooks, and I visited the new Hoover Library on the sixteenth of January and met with Mindy Bodenhamer, the assistant director with the idea of having our show there. Two dates are available — April 18 and May 23 — however on each

date our display time is limited to two days only. This is probably not enough time to adequately display and judge the items. The new library is scheduled to open in February and it is a beautiful facility. It certainly would be an attractive location for our show if more display time were to become available. Another option that is available is for us to return to Sloss this year. Since the museum of art is undergoing expansion and remodeling, many of the displays are being moved to Sloss and that has made space a premium there this year. Ron Bates, the Assistant Curator for Sloss, has worked tirelessly to make a spot that would be suitable for us this year. Here is his proposal:

Saturday August 22 Bring in pieces — setup
Sunday August 23 Setup
Monday August 24 — Sloss Closed to public —
Tuesday August 25 Display
Wednes. August 26 Display
Thursday August 27 Display
Friday August 28 Judging and Awards
Saturday August 29 Display and Demonstrations
Sunday August 30 Pick-up pieces — tear down
Monday August 31 Pick-up pieces — tear down

Even though these dates are later in the year than we have been accustomed to in the past, please look them over and let's talk about them at the next meeting.

See you on February 13, 1992.

Fred Baker

NEXT PROGRAM FEBRUARY 13, 1992 • 7:00 PM

Well, we are going to try again to have John McGee from Carrollton, Ga. You may remember he was expected at the January meeting but ended up in the Carolinas and ultimately in Atlanta too late to get to our meeting. Nine years ago, when we were meeting in the manual arts department at Pelham High School, John brought us his favorite program on the subject of hand-made wooden planes. Mr. McGee is an expert builder of hand planes. He will share with us what wood to use, how to shape the blocks, how to finish them, where to get the hardware, and how to properly sharpen a plane blade. If you have ever wondered whether you might like to make a plane or a set of planes now is your chance to see how it is done.

LAST MEETING • JANUARY 1992

For a few moments we thought Pres. Fred was going to be the program when he announced our program was somewhere in North (or South) Carolina. However, Dale came to his rescue (whew!) and came up with a group of members who shared some of their work with us. Leading the group was Ivan Kronberg who showed us his two latest (of many) bowls. They were of Ash and of Red Cedar and were beauties. Harold Phillips had a cherry bowl which was up to Harold's usual standards. Frank Jones dazzled us with a lovely Zebra wood bowl. Jack Perry had a Walnut end table which contains some 32 mortise and tenon

Cliff Saxon, our Secretary-Treasurer wants us all to know we have three new members as of January 1992. They are Roy A. Smith, Paul Thibodaux and Rick Vinson. We welcome you fellows and hope you will find membership in the Guild as rewarding as the rest of us. You will begin to receive your Newsletter shortly and will be included in the next roster which will be out in the Spring.

HELP — HELP

Cliff Saxon has an acquaintance who wants a child's playhouse built in the back yard. This calls for some hammering, nailing and sawing, but should be fun to do. Call Cliff at 823-4467 if you are interested.

NOTORIETY OF A MEMBER

Did you see the picture and write-up in the Birmingham News on January 4th about our good friend and member Tom Timmons. Well, it seems Tom is prolific when it comes to building doll houses. Tom has four Barbie-crazed granddaughters and this seemingly innocent situation caused him to start building doll houses for them. In addition to his family models, he has built and sold some 95 of them. They are sold unfinished so the buyers may finish them to their own tastes. The article in the paper showed him and another gentleman and his wife who are devoted to doll house making.

Probably one of the most talked about and least understood subjects in wood finishing is the use of products to remove old existing finishes prior to attempting to beautify them with new finishes. Once again, however, as in the use of abrasives there are wrong ways and right ways and wrong materials and right materials for each piece of furniture that is to be brought down to bare wood by removing in some manner the existing finish.

Selecting your Paint Remover

One of the most important things to consider when attempting to remove existing finishes, is whether or not you have any idea of what kind of wood and what kind of existing finish is presently on the piece. Another thought might be whether or not you have the materials on hand to completely finish the task. If the wood is one of the costly hardwoods such as walnut, mahogany, cherry, or the like, it does not seem to be of much sense to employ a liquid or paste water wash remover and take the chance of soaking down a valuable piece of hardwood. In addition, if the hardwood is of the veneer type, the water might very well loosen the glue with which the veneer has been applied. By the same token, if the existing finish is of the buttermilk paint type, and you have already applied 3 or 4 coats of the strongest variety liquid or paste remover available without much success, it follows that maybe you should be looking

ribbons are awarded at each level. You can see there are plenty of places to win. You must understand, however, there is active participation and competition among the members. It is friendly, but spirited. There are prizes much like we have at Christmas, that are well worth winning. So get your plans moving, and let's have as good and interesting show this year as we have had for the last nine years. There will be more about this each month as the time gets nearer.

DOOR PRIZE

A hush fell over the audience as the name of the winner was being determined from the sign-in sheet. The lucky winner was John Tow, and he took a package of three router bits home, contributed by Birmingham Saw Works. We all, and especially John, appreciate the contribution.

DUES — DUES — DUES

Yes, it is that time of year again. What time? The time of year when the Guild collects the \$20 annual dues from its members. That is all it is, \$20. For that you get eleven programs, a Christmas party and a newsletter each month. Dues are payable in January and if one wants his/her name to appear in the roster and continue to receive the Newsletter the dues must be paid by the end of February.

GUIDE TO WOOD & WOOD FINISHING — PART II

Last month we printed an excerpt from the finishing book published by H. Behlen & Bro., producers of a premier line of fully compatible wood finishing materials and products. This is the second installment and unless we receive any negative comments will continue these excerpts until the book is finished.

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joins — very nice. Fred (Pres., that is) demonstrated his new lathe designed for minute objects like pens, pencils, tops and small bowls. Then Mr. Dale himself — weed pots made of plum, oak, osage orange, red cedar, dogwood and persimmon; bowls of elm and buckeye; a week pot made of an Australian seed pod; some hand mirrors; a pneumatic sanding drum; and a turtle-neck apron. It turned out to be a fun evening seeing what our friends are doing in their shops.

WINTER/SPRING WOODWORKING CLASS

President Baker announced that David Traylor will undertake to teach our class again this spring. The class will cost \$75 and will begin on February 4, 1992 and run for ten weeks from six to nine o'clock P.M. on Tuesday night of each week. Contact Pres. Fred to see if any openings are still available. The class is held at David's shop.

SPRING SHOW

It was mentioned briefly in last month's Bulletin that it is high time we got started on our projects for this year's show. This is not anything new to us old timers, but some of our newer members may not be aware of our annual show. All our members are encouraged, and in fact demand made of, to make a project in your shop and enter it in the show. It can be small or large since the categories of projects allow us to win ribbons in several of them. We have divided the categories into the following:

Traditional Furniture
Contemporary Furniture
Woodturning
Wood Carving
Small Objects
Toys

Each category is divided into two groups, Intermediate Level and Advanced Level. First, second, and third place

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for a product which is designed specifically for removing this type finish. They are available. A last thought would include the fact that by utilizing the last of your proper grade of steel wool, and be forced to attempt to complete the task with scrapers or rags may just prove to be extremely exasperating when only mediocre results have been obtained.

Removing existing Finishes

There are 3 basic methods employed in removing existing finishes. They are by mechanical means, the use of heat and commercially prepared liquids or powders.

Included in the mechanical means are the use of abrasives by hand or by machines, employing cabinet scrapers, or hand planing. Since this method of finish removal is employed in only a very certain select few instances, very little space will be devoted except to mention that this method can cause damage to the underlying wood if extreme care is not taken. This does not hold as true for the hand sanding as the others. In fact the hand sanding method of removal may be a viable one when finish removal is necessary on a partially completed task. For example, a piece of mahogany has been stained, filled and coated with a thin wash coat of shellac when you notice on the label of the topcoat material that it is not for use over shellac. Since most commercial liquid removers will also remove some stains and virtually all filler, hand sanding removal of the shellac coat is certainly less costly than the re-application of stain and filler. In this case, only open-coat type abrasive paper should be used.

Heat Removal

The heat removal method is normally associated with blow torches or propane and butane torches. This method is not recommended at all unless you desire the scorched wood look or to blow up your work place. There are, however, finishes on the market today where this is virtually the only means of removal. These include the two part epoxy finish and the imported furniture employing the use of polyester resins. When employing the heat removal method it is recommended that it be accomplished away from your regular work area, preferably out of doors. Hold the flame from the torch only as close to the material as necessary to cause it to lift and never attempt to point the flame between the wood and the finish or you will spend extra time sanding away the scorch marks on the wood. Remember, you are only trying to cause the epoxy or polyester to buckle and lift from the heat. You are not attempting to cause it to melt. Once the buckling starts, it can be aided along by a long handled putty knife. Make sure the outer edges of the putty knife are rounded off so that no gouging occurs. Do not confuse polyester finishes with polyurethane finishes. The latter can be removed by the application of many liquid removers.

By far the most popular method of removing existing finishes is by the utilization of commercially prepared liquids or powders. These commercially prepared liquids can be divided into two basic classes with some variation to each class. For convenience, these classes are designated FLAMMABLE and NON-FLAMMABLE.

Flammable Removers

Flammable removers pretty well employ the same volatile solvents from brand to brand, the major difference being the percentage of each solvent in the mixture. If remover properties were only based on the solvents, it would be of little value as they would evaporate too fast to attack the

finish. For this reason other products are added such as waxes or celluloses which form a surface barrier to help prevent the active solvents from undergoing this rapid evaporation and thus have more time for the attack. In many cases, the same products assist in thickening the remover to make it more of a paste form. In other cases, special products are added to assist in thickening the remover. In general these additives do nothing by themselves in loosening the finish but are merely an aid in assisting the solvents to do their job. The major disadvantage of flammable removers is inherent in the vary name. They are flammable and as such, can pose a serious problem if SAFETY FIRST is not practiced. The major advantage is that they are normally cheaper in price, than the non-flammable type, the lowest price being that of the pure solvents. The price naturally increases in proportion to the amount and type of additives.

Non-Flammable Removers

Removers in the non-flammable family differ from the flammable only in the solvent system utilized. They are more prone to attack a wider variety of finishes, are more efficient on thicker coats and as the name implies are non-flammable. They are generally more expensive as well. As indicated in the previous section, the solvent system by itself is of little value. This holds true for non-flammable removers as well. For example, methylene chloride which is usually one of the more predominant solvents in non flammable removers cannot be really classed as a remover by itself. This is because of its extremely fast evaporation rate. When a surface barrier agent is added, however, it becomes an excellent remover and so forth. Generally the higher the percent of this solvent per gallon, the better its removal capabilities and also the higher the price.

Another feature of removers that bears a little thought are those that bill themselves as "Water Washable". In our opinion it does not make sense that we go through all of the trouble of finishing a piece of furniture to protect it from the elements and then when the finish is being removed to soak it down with water. In the case of antiques the water will also virtually eliminate all patina the piece has developed through the years as well as having a detrimental effect on any animal hide glue or bone glue used during the original manufacture.

While still in the area of non-flammable removers, there are one or two more that deserve mention or more.


Powder Removers

In the beginning of this section, mention was made of a remover that will make the removal of buttermilk or milk paint certainly less exasperating. This is a powder form of remover which is mixed with water to a cream consistency and then spread on the milk paint. It will probably remove more paint in one application than six or seven coats of the strongest liquid or paste remover. Thus it holds that before you begin your task or removing an existing finish it would pay in the long run to attempt to identify the finish you are trying to remove and get the right tool for the job.

As least one parting shot on non-flammable removers, some mention should be made of various caustic products such as lye mixed with water and applied hot or the piece of furniture is dipped in same. This mixture is near disaster on soft woods and complete disaster when used on hardwoods.


Comments on Finish Removal

1. Try to determine what kind of wood you are attempting to strip.
2. Try to determine what kind of finish is present.
3. If the work can be accomplished in a horizontal position perhaps an expensive heavy bodied remover is not necessary. If it must be accomplished in a vertical position it may be a necessity.
4. Do not be skimpy in the application of the remover. Apply a liberal coat brushing-on in one direction only to keep the surface barrier formed intact in order that the solvents may do their work.
5. Non-flammable removers are generally stronger than flammable ones.
6. Do not use natural bristle brushes or brushes with plastic handles. Some removers will dissolve both the bristles and plastic handles.
7. Blunt down the edges and corners of putty knives or scrapers in order to prevent accidental gouging. If the remover has been selected and applied correctly, you do not need sharp edges to chisel or scrape the finish.
8. Just as soon as the finish begins to crinkle under the remover, start the removal process with a putty knife. Do not allow the remover to dry on the piece or you may have more problems trying to get rid of some of the dried additives than the original finish.
9. After the putty knife has removed most of the material, apply another coat of remover and shift from the putty knife to steel wool to complete the task. Keep at it until all of the existing finish has been taken from the piece.
10. A good supply of various sized dowel rods cut to a 45° angle on one end will assist in the removal from carvings, grooves and the like.
11. After you are satisfied that all the old finish has been removed, wash the piece down with lacquer thinner. This will no only remove any residue or surface barrier agents left from the remover, but will also assist in the elimination of a problem to be discussed at the end of this section.
12. When wiping down with lacquer thinner the piece need not be saturated. Wipe only in one direction and then turn the rag over and wipe again. Unfold and wipe again. Keep it up until the complete area has been wiped down with lacquer thinner. Do not take more than one swipe down the piece with any section of the wiping rags.
13. Read safety directions on the remover can and comply with same.

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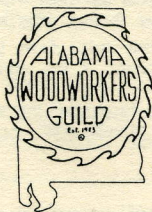
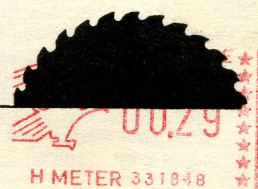
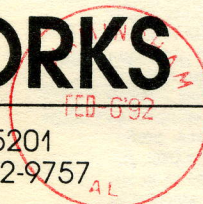
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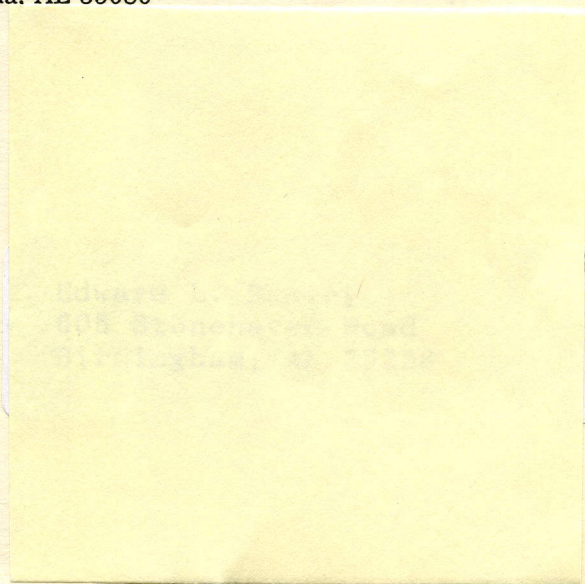
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