

NEWSLETTER

VOLUME X NUMBER 6

JUNE 1992

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

On May 23, 1992, Ed Sheriff, Jerry DeVenny, Mary Spanos, Mike Key and I met with Ron Bates, Assistant Curator at Sloss Furnaces to continue planning for our Summer Show. We were all pleasantly surprised to find that they are giving us an extra week for our activities. At this time the schedule will be as follows:

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Thursday August 13 | 12:00-7:00pm Bring in |
| Friday August 14 | 10:00am Judging 5:30-8:30pm Reception and Awards |
| Saturday August 15 | 1:00-5:00pm Demonstrations |
| Saturday August 22 | 1:00-5:00pm Demonstrations |
| Sunday August 30 | Tear Down |

The schedule gives us an opportunity to have demonstrations on two consecutive Saturdays. This will be a lot of work, however I believe that we can do it. We would like to have three lathes running, scroll saw work being done, dovetails being cut, carving in progress, router work, steam bending, band saw activities and whatever else you can think of. Be thinking of what you would like to do and please tell me or one of the Summer Show committee members.

I was happy to hear Ben Neighbor's preliminary report on the progress of the Toy Committee and their decision to assist Childrens Hospital in their needs. In time, as the committee gets more specific information from them, I will share it with

the group. I am sure that when the year is over, we will be able to look back and know that we had done our best in this effort.

Charles Ard, a guild member indicated to me at the last meeting that he is willing to assist other members in machine work such as making some odd part for a vintage machine that you may have. You may contact Charlie at home - 956-1871 or at work at 320-6130.

See you at the next meeting, June 11, 1992 at Acton Moulding and Supply at 7:00 pm.

Fred

NEXT PROGRAM JUNE 11, 1992 • 7:00 PM

MARQUETRY - The art of taking variously colored woods and making inlays to form scenes. That is what we have in store for us by Mr. Thomas Burns of Asheville, N.C. Mr. Burns will be in Birmingham to put on a two-day demonstration, or workshop, for the Alabama Designer/Craftsmen group of which several of our woodworkers are members. If you have any desire to attend the workshop on June 13-14, you may call Betty Whitfield at 942-5208 for details. We are fortunate to get him for our program, and we expect all of us will want to learn more about this ancient craft.

LAST PROGRAM • MAY 1992

Fulfilling the prediction in the MAY NEWSLETTER that the May program would be tops, Mr. Lane Latham and his lovely wife Margaret challenged our creativity with his practical and down-to-earth approach to making and selling rocking chairs, footstools, barstools, swings, valet chair for his nibs, and occasionally other similar products ordered by the public. Mr. Latham sets up shop at Tannahill Park on weekends where the public may enjoy watching him create his products. He will have a booth and will be demonstrating this year at the annual CITY STAGES affair in Lynn Park. Lane confessed to being 52 years old and having had 23 years of commercial woodworking. His rocking chair is the largest selling item he makes and it sells for \$325. The chair has a four foot back which is woven cane; the cane is actually Indonesian rattan vine and the seat is woven with the same material. The legs are made of ash, the frames of hickory, and the rockers/arms of red oak. He finishes them with fruitwood oil stain, a sealer and polyurethane (to compensate for outdoor use). His other products are finished similarly. He doesn't waste his time making things that don't sell. We appreciate the Lathams driving this distance to share with us their talents.

BE APPRISED OF THIS

For the second year in a row our talented Dale Lewis has won "BEST OF SHOW" at the PANOPLY (Arts Festival) in Huntsville, Al. His Crab Table (legs look like crab claws) was the winner and the museum bought it. We continue to take pride in having Dale as an inspiration.

NEW ROSTERS

The annual updating of our Roster of Membership was available at the May meeting. Those who were present got theirs and the rest of us may secure theirs at the June meeting. Plans are in the mill for each of us to execute a form between now and the 1993 edition to update the tools and experience background which has changed for most of us since we joined the Guild.

TOYS FOR TOTS

That may be a term we will apply to our annual contribution to the community somewhat less than previously. Ben Neighbors, Chairman of the committee to investigate this program, reported that after a visit to Children's Hospital with the Board of Directors his committee is recommending we let the hospital be our first priority. After dinner at the hospital, we were treated to a video tape of the history of the hospital and then taken on a tour of the facility. It is a lovely structure with everything, repeat EVERYTHING, designed to accommodate sick children. They have needs all year long for toys since birthdays and other special occasions occur while the children are hospitalized. They have play rooms where toys are essential and since some of the patients are

teenagers, the needs are varied for the object of entertainment needed. As it happens, sometimes the parents live long distances from the hospital and the child may have a birthday and the parents can't come for the occasion. When this happens, the hospital sees to it that the child gets "something," at least, on his/her birthday. The hospital does not have need for the number of toys we usually make at Christmas, so it is being considered that we use the excess to give to Toys for Tots or other such organization. If you have any suggestions please call Ben at 942-4587. More as this unfolds.

DOOR PRIZE

With only 44 members present, or at least that many who had signed in, James Gilbert won the door prize which was a dovetail saw.

RON'S CHECK

Each month we anticipate our check from Ron. Just in case you aren't familiar with what this is, Ron donates a percentage of the sales to Guild members to the Guild, and this is in addition to the discount he gives us at the time of purchase. This month it was for \$76.60 and we do appreciate it, Ron.

SHOW AND TELL


One of the highlights of our meetings is when our members show and tell us about some object they have made. The variety of pursuits is amazing, and we encourage everyone to bring something to the next meeting and to any or all meetings thereafter. This month we had:

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Dale Lewis | An osage orange bowl (complete with holes) A buckeye bowl with four walnut legs in the shape of lightening bolts, and the name of the piece is "Egglectic". |
| Fred Sandlin | Several cabinet scraper burnishers; some at different angles and of different burnishing materials (file and carbide rod) |
| Fred Baker | A splendid drill press table jig complete with adjustable fence and a sliding stop block. |

WOODTURNERS - LISTEN UP


As your editor, we answer the telephone and are confronted with our venerable member, Charlie Brown. He relates a story about one huge and two almost huge turnings in the window of Bryant Galleries in Mountain Brook. He says the big one is two feet tall and about eighteen inches in diameter and is shaped like an urn. He figures we would be interested in seeing them and wonders if any of our other members might also be interested. We discussed Dale Lewis and Harold Phillips as possible candidates. The next day we journey to Bryant Galleries, and just as Charlie had described, there were these three gorgeous bowls in the window. We entered the gallery and the lady-in-charge was most gracious to permit us to examine and even take pictures of them. By this time we had noticed the prices of these three, and they are priced at \$1900, \$2000 and \$2200 respectively. Then we noticed the name of the artist is Radeschi. For some reason that name rang a bell and also the large urn looked familiar. When we got home we checked our March 1992 issue of AMERICAN WOODTURNER and true to our memory, on page 33 was a picture of the big urn and its name "Egyptian Tear-Drop" and that George Radeschi of Doylestown, Pa. is the artist. Here we are, way down here in Birmingham, and we have a national artist showing his work in one of our art galleries. Go by Bryant Galleries and see for yourself.

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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SOME ANNUAL SHOW DETAILS

The show this year will be longer than in the recent past and will precede, and be included, in the Sloss Furnaces National Historic Site annual Kudzu Festival on Saturday, August 29. This assures us of good attendance as well as publicity. All member woodworkers are encouraged to enter the show with up to four pieces of

whatever you do best. Deliveries to Sloss will be scheduled for the afternoon and evening of Thursday, August 13.

As in last year's show, all you need to do when you deliver your work, is to fill out a numbered form and place it at that numbered place in the gallery and then eagerly await the judge's decision the next day. Committee members will help you.

Sloss is taking the lead in getting publicity to the local media, and the committee hopes to augment that effort. Keep watching the following two issues for further details.

Ed Sheriff and Jerry DeVenn
For the Committee

Evil Spirits and the Barley Corn Rule

England's Saint Bede, (673-735) was one of the first scholars to systematically collect all that was known on subjects ranging from grammar to physics. Although Bede spent his entire life in study and contemplation at the monastery at Jarrow, recently fragments of a manuscript attributed to Bede have surfaced that indicate the cleric was a part time woodworker. The remnant is titled, "The Presence of Evil Spirits in the Art and Mystery of Woodworking."

Bede's text begins with a listing of events that happened in his woodworking shop that could not be explained by any "natural reason" apparent cause on a well-planned plank. Why does a choice piece of wood warp? Why does the bow on a lathe break when the finishing cut is almost completed?

Bede found evidence of evil spirits at all phases of a woodworking project, which led him to ponder: Why do hairs from brushes appear in dried varnish? Why do crude dividers slip, wooden pegs break just below the surface, and why does a gimlet slip and scratch a new altar table?

What if Bede were living today? A longer catalog of strange and frustrating events would add to his list and support his theory. As an example, consider the shop vacuum. Is there anything more worthy of the designa-

tion "instrument of the devil"? The noise threatens the hearing, the hose is a snake that coils, kinks and clogs. The electrical cord delights in catching under the casters. And when being emptied, the contents spill on the floor with such ease that there must be an evil spirit directing it.

Further, cordless tools fail at the wrong moment, brads and finishing nails sprout metallic whiskers on their points. Straight grain boards suddenly bind the saw and leave a burned spot on the edge that is to show. Glue secretly squeezes out of joints, leaving areas impervious to finish. A design problem that calls for a few minutes uses an hour.

I think Bede was right, or at least he offered an explanation that was based on events that we all have observed in our own shop. So the next time you suspect an evil spirit in your shop, hurl a hammer at any spot in the room, and see for yourself that demons continue to follow the Barley Corn Rule set down by the venerable Bede 1200 years ago.

Corn Rule—if an object falls, it will always land one barley corn (about one-third of an inch) beyond reach. He experiments with other objects by dropping or throwing them to various parts of the room. The results bolster his belief that woodshops afford an "attractive and secure home for the forces of darkness."

Saint Bede is buried at Durham Cathedral in England. If you measure the stone that bears his name, you will find it exactly two barley corns out of square.

—Wilbur W. Sauer, Paxton, Ill.
EDITORS NOTE: The author extends his apologies to St. Bede for this playful speculation about the saint's life in the 8th century.

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING ENTRY BLANK

Exhibit space for your woodwork is pre-planned. Therefore, the approximate dimensions in inches of each piece should be listed, as well as whether it should be exhibited on pedestal, floor or wall. Because of the planning involved for accommodating each piece in a designated space in as pleasing a manner as possible, late entries cannot be accepted. It will also be helpful in planning to list the category (Contemporary Furniture, Traditional Furniture, Turnings, Carvings, Small Objects, Toys) of the piece and the level (Intermediate, Advanced) of your work.

ENTRY BLANK - WOODWORKER'S ANNUAL SHOW

All woodworker's entering the show should complete this form and mail it to Ed Sheriff, 5018 Cameron Road, Birmingham, AL 35242 so that it is in his hands no later than Sunday, August 16. They may also be delivered to the June, July or August meetings. See above for explanation.

| <u>WHAT IS IT?</u> | <u>DIMENSIONS</u> <u>L x D x H</u> | <u>PEDESTAL, WALL</u> <u>OR FLOOR</u> | <u>CATEGORY</u> | <u>LEVEL</u> |
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| 1. | | | | |
| 2. | | | | |
| 3. | | | | |
| 4. | | | | |

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| Member's Name | Date |
|---------------|------|

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