

# NEWSLETTER

VOLUME XIII NUMBER 2 FEBRUARY 1995

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Mike Key . . . . . President  
Wallace Williams . . . . Vice President  
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Charles Ard  
Dan Browning  
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Dale Lewis  
Ben Neighbors  
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Spruce McRee 1983 - 1986  
Leonard Sanders 1987  
Nelson Brooks 1988 - 1989  
Jim Caldwell 1990 - 1991  
Fred Baker 1992 - 1993  
Ed Sheriff 1994

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Last month's program was a big success. Wallace did a really good job for his first program. Let's hope he keeps this up! Nelson did a great job arranging things. After Nelson did what he does best (talk) I started by showing how a Mont Blanc pen is made. Then Ben Neighbors showed his unusual way of making pens on a band saw. Leave it to Ben to do something different! Next, Jim Caldwell explained his Klein lathe and told how to turn tops. Everyone seemed to enjoy all of the demonstrations.

At the last Board Meeting we discussed having John Jordan back for a Saturday seminar on turning. We are looking at May 13 for a possible date. John is a nationally known wood turner who specializes in hollow vessels. He has two informative videos on turning that are really good. We will let you know more at the February meeting.

Wallace tells me that the February program will be Dean Black. Dean has a shop and gallery in Springville, Alabama. He will show how he makes the large columns that are his specialty. See you at the meeting,

Mike

## NEXT PROGRAM

FEBRUARY 9, 1995 • 7:00 PM

This promises to be one of our more outstanding programs. Wallace Williams, our new Vice-President and program

chairman has invited Dean Black to titillate our imagination and create in us an ambition to perform more and better woodwork. Dean is a long-time friend of our Guild. He was the judge for our Show in 1993 and has visited us on several occasions and has been a gracious host to us at his shop and gallery in Springville. If you would like to see an example of his work, pay a visit to the Birmingham Museum of Art and ask to be directed to the Oriental section. There you will see several walnut columns, about 12" in diameter supporting huge walnut beams like the Orientals use in their gardens. He doesn't fool around with small stuff but is available for commission work of any style quality or quantity. All you have to do is visit his place in Springville and you will see what can be done with wood. Last month we had "Small-Fun" stuff and now, this month, we will have "Big-Fun" stuff. If you question this description, come see.

## LAST PROGRAM • JANUARY, 1995

The program was announced and advertised as being put on by Guild members and that the program would be concerned with "fun" things to make in the shop. Well, the advance billing certainly was accurate since everyone had a great time and many were influenced to tackle similar projects. Nelson Brooks, past president and long-time Guild member started the program. Nelson is a full-time woodworker in his home shop and has exhibited considerable talent over the years. Nelson

suggested several publications from which supplies can be ordered for pens, pencils, hand mirrors, hand magnifying glass and other small "fun" things. He has made several hundred pens and pencils, which he says he does as a way of relaxing, when the strain of making a commission piece gets too great. He has also made the hand mirrors and other things for the same reason. Then Mike Key, our 1995 President, was introduced. Mike also engages in pen making, both for relaxation and for profit. He uses mostly exotic woods in his pens and pencils and favors the "Mont Blanc" style of pen. Mike likes to make oil lamps from dogwood, or any other pretty wood, which have reservoirs of oil and cloth wicks protruding. He says you will be surprised how many friends you will make by giving a few of these away. As for the finish, he prefers for most of his "fun" projects a Woodturner's French Polish. Then Nelson introduced Ben Neighbors, our Toys for Tots Guru. By way of introduction Nelson intimated Ben was "different" from all the other pen and pencil makers in the United States in that he doesn't subscribe to the mandrel/lathe method of turning the cylinders. Instead, he has built a three-way sliding jig, which holds the pen/pencil blank, and which is fastened to the bandsaw table. The bandsaw has had its cutting blade removed and a one-inch sanding belt has been installed, and when the pen blank is rotated against the moving sanding belt it is shaped into a cylinder. He also has a jig for drilling the blanks before inserting the brass insert, which he glues into place with Hot Stuff. All these Guild

members putting on the program mentioned how they force the brass insert into the wood blank: by use of a drill press, bench vise or an ammunition press. When referring to the ammunition press (used by Mike Key), Ben suggested one probably should be careful how big a charge he uses in it. Then Nelson introduced Jim Caldwell, our sophisticated past president, whose woodworking talents are legend in the Guild. Jim rolled out his mobile cabinet on which was installed a Bonnie Klein miniature lathe with a DC motor and speed control. Jim has made pens and pencils as well as other "fun" things, but he has settled down to spinning tops. Not just any old top but really pretty things made from exotic woods, or hard woods which he colors and/or, using a chatter tool, puts unusual designs on the bottoms. He has made (and sold) so many now he has lost count but he says everywhere he demonstrates top-making it usually draws a crowd. These tops are finger-spun and have been timed running some 50 seconds before falling idle. In addition to chatter design on the bottom, he uses a Magic Marker to put a spiral design on the bottom simply by reducing the speed of the lathe and by starting at the center and moving the Marker to the edge before lifting the Marker. As for what kind of Markers to use for coloring wood, you best determine whether it will "run" or smear before using it and you may do that by, as he said it, "spitting on it." (How unsanitary, especially if you chew tobacco or dip snuff.) We, the Guild, are grateful to these members for going to the trouble to bring their tools and products and sharing their expertise with us. Thanks Nelson, Mike, Ben and Jim.

### DOOR PRIZE

The door prize was handled a little differently in January. Ordinarily, we give a \$15 gift certificate to Acton's but this month

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.

the door prizes were donated by the members who brought the program. The way it went is as follows:

DONATOR	DONATEE	DONATED
Nelson Brooks	Jack Perry	Pen
	Jerry Gardarnieder	Pen
	Ray Walker	Pen
Mike Key	Dan Williamson	Oil Lamp
Ben Neighbors	Floyd Cox	Pen/Pencil Set
Jim Caldwell	Bill Hallman	Spinning Top

We don't know whether cabin fever or interest in the announced program caused us to have such a great turn-out at the January meeting, but we believe it was a record attendance of 94 present. Keep on coming folks, it only gets better as we go along into 1995.

### JIM CALDWELL

It is fitting, we think, to recognize Jim for having been elected President of the Alabama Designer Craftsmen organization. It would appear his tenure as president of our Guild laid the groundwork for further recognition as a leader and craftsman.

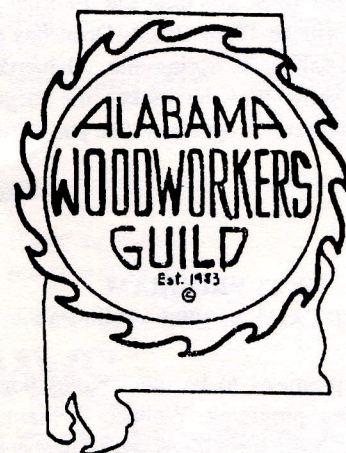
### ACTON'S

It becomes increasingly difficult to find ways to say thanks to Ron and Sue Acton for their hospitality and support of our Guild. Having a splendid place like theirs in which to meet probably is the reason for the success of our Guild. Not only that, Guild members are afforded a discount on tools and supplies, and there is always the friendly assistance we all need from time to time with our woodworking problems. In addition to all that, Acton's gives to the Guild any profit made on sales to Guild members and for the month of December 1994 it amounted to \$69.44. Not knowing any other way to say it, thanks Acton's.

### SHOW AND TELL

Many times this segment of our meeting is almost as interesting as the program. We continue to be amazed at the talent in the Guild and the objects they bring and share with us at the meetings. This month we had: Dale Lewis with an end table — not just any old end table but a three-cornered (triangle) with three legs — not just any old legs, but turned legs with a ladies foot in high heels

and splendid ankles to catch your eye. Lovely, Dale. Another superb piece by Jerry Vines, our carver extraordinaire, displayed a Mandarin Duck with feathers a little ruffled and in full color. Your usual fine job, Jerry. Ed Sheriff, our immediate past president, presented another of his absolutely unbelievable jewelry boxes. It contains 170 earring compartments as well as places for rings and other jewelry. It appeared to be some 12" x 14" in rectangle and perhaps 12" tall and contains some six drawers. Splendid, Ed. Dan Browning, a Board member, complied with the wishes (orders) of his spouse and showed us a plant stand made of walnut, with tapered legs, and the top appearing to be some 10" square; then a serving tray with four raised sides and gripping holes cut in them, also made of walnut. Nice job, Dan. Ivan Kronberg, the super talent who can make anything, this time he showed a carving. Picture a back board some 24" x 36" with flowers cut out on two opposing corners. Then visualize a raised rendition of a limb of dogwood with blooms. The dogwood replica is suspended over the back board. He indicated he was going to have it painted by an artist, and we hope he will bring it back and let us see the finished product. Really fine, Ivan. Leonard Sanders, the least talented of them all, showed a model 1937 Pontiac Coupe as depicted in WOODWORKERS JOURNAL made of walnut, red oak, mahogany and a dashboard of Brazilian Lacewood. Having bought some wood in Oklahoma recently, he showed a bowl turned from Kingwood. It may have been of interest that the core of the bowl was parted out and a small bowl made from it (instead of letting this material end up on the floor). Then a Banksia nut, from Australia, which he cut in two pieces and made lidded boxes of each of the two pieces. Our thanks to Leonard, also.



## RICHARD BREWER

As advertised in the January Newsletter Richard visited the Georgia Woodworkers Guild in November 1994. Reprinted here is his report on that visit:

### *A Meeting With the Georgia Woodworkers Guild*

Last year when I was preparing to take over as Vice-President of the Guild, I was discussing ideas for programs with my Dad. He had a suggestion that I might contact the Georgia Woodworkers Guild and talk with them about an exchange program of some kind. I called their Vice-President and talked with him, and we both agreed that it might be interesting for our Guilds to interact in some way. We stayed in occasional contact over the course of the year, and then a few weeks ago they called me and asked me if I'd be willing to come over and put on a program for their November meeting. I told them I'd be happy to.

On November 14th I drove to Atlanta and met with the Board of Directors of the Georgia Woodworkers Guild for dinner. They were a very interesting group of folks, and we discussed the way our respective groups do things. There were many similarities, and quite a few differences as well.

The Georgia Guild has about twice the total membership that we do. However, their meeting attendance is about the same as ours. Because Atlanta is so much bigger than Birmingham, many members can't always make the trip. They have been holding their meetings in an auditorium at a college on Atlanta's northeast side. However, they are moving to a different locale as of December.

After dinner we headed to the meeting. They meet on the first Monday of the month and have a premeeting seminar each month. For November one of their members gave a thirty minute seminar on sharpening chisels and plane irons.

The actual meeting began at seven-thirty and proceeded somewhat like ours with announcements and show and tell. Where we have a drawing for the door prize, they

do something a bit different. They have a raffle, using numbered tickets that members purchase before the meeting for two dollars. When the winning number is drawn, that person receives 25% of the collected raffle money. A second 25% goes into their general operating funds, then the remaining 50% is put into the scholarship fund, as they call it.

The scholarship concept that they have might be worth adopting by our Guild. It is a pool of funds that can be available to any member, or members of the group if they want to attend a class somewhere, or if there is a particular tool or machine they need and can't afford, or whatever. Members can apply to receive the scholarship, and it is awarded after a vote by the board of directors, or the membership at large. I'm certain that there are more details to this than I am aware of, but the idea seemed interesting.

The rest of the meeting proceeded much the same as ours. I was called upon to present the program on the design and construction of my hand mirrors that many of you have seen. Before I got into the program I spoke, at their request, about our guild, and told them about our meetings, our annual show, our Toys for Tots program, our field trips and so forth. After the program was over there was a question and answer session and then the meeting closed.

The Board of Directors seemed to like the idea of our groups interacting more. They wanted me to encourage any other of our membership to contact them if they have a program they would be willing to present. They paid me pretty well for my time and travel, and offered to put me up in a hotel, but I decided to just drive on back that night.

They also told me about several among their membership who might be available to do programs for us. One fellow they just raved about is a miniaturist. He makes fully functional tools and such on a very small scale. They were telling me about hand planes less than an inch long that he casts and finishes in immaculate detail. Another fellow I met is the conservator for the state of Georgia. He repairs and refinishes all of the antiques in state owned facilities and also

builds authentic replicas to match existing pieces. The guild seems to have quite a pool of talent that we might be able to draw upon.

On my drive home I mulled over the experience and several things stood out in my mind as I compared our two guilds. One thing in particular was impressed on me, and that is that we should feel fortunate and appreciative of the service that Ron Acton provides us. One of the biggest struggles the Georgia Guild has had over the years is having a good place to meet. They have had to move several times, and are doing so again, because they were dissatisfied with their meeting place. We also should feel lucky to have Sloss Furnaces accommodating us so well for our annual show. I know that several of us have felt like there must be a better place for our show, but compared to the Georgia Guild, we have a good deal. They have a show each year at the Woodworking Trade Show. That sounds great at first, but they told me it is a bit of a problem. First of all, they can only set up for that weekend, and have to be out of there on Sunday. They also are frustrated that their show is seen mostly by people who are involved in the woodworking trade, and not much by the public at large. The Georgia Guild does, however seem to be better off financially than we are. I'm sure that is in part due to their larger membership, but I think their raffle program helps a lot also.

All told, meeting the Georgia Guild was a positive experience for me. I hope that our two Guilds will be able to interact more in the future. They really stressed to me that they'd love to have more of our members come and do programs for them. Interested parties can contact them at P.O. Box 8006, Atlanta, Georgia 30306-0006, (404) 892-2487.

Happy 1995,  
Richard Brewer

### IN MEMORIUM

We were saddened to learn of the death of Betty Whitfield, wife of long-time Guild member Jesse Whitfield. Our condolences, Jesse.

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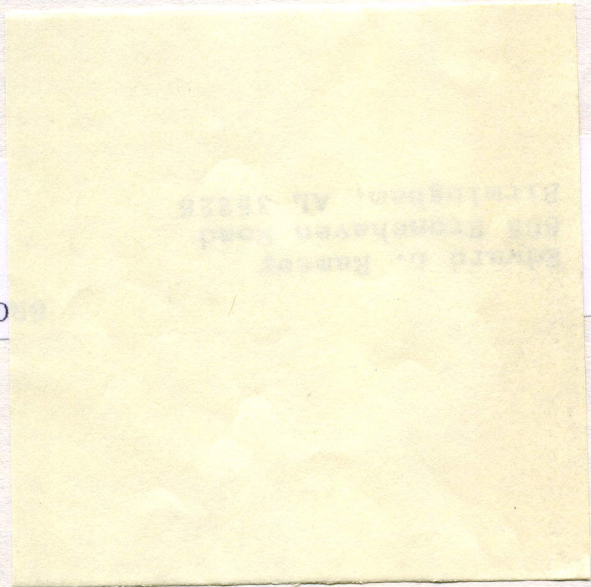
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