



# Guild News

VOLUME XIV

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## GUILD HAPPENINGS

*April 11  
Simple Jigs and  
Fixtures  
by Guild Members*

*April 19-20  
HGH Hardware  
Open House*

I'm looking forward to this next meeting. it will be on jigs. (No Leonard and Frank will not dance!) I'm hoping to know better how y'all produce those beautiful pieces with your own jigs and ingenuity. Dogonit you can't buy every fancy commercial jig you see or you'll never be able to afford the wood to make the project. If you think to make a diagram of your one-of-a-kind and a couple of Xerox Copies--that's okay too. I'm going to bring in 3 myself: one for cutting dados across a board, one for jointing long stock when you don't have a jointer and one for doing tenons on a Vega Fence (I've got one attached to my Artisan Powermatic)--no relation to the Chevrolet Vega though--thank God. I keep getting amazed reading these woodwork magazines--how many simple things I haven't yet tried.

I'm still in awe this week after renting the Video of Frank Klausz doing hand dovetails from Ronnie. My first hand dovetails were done with much help from Frank Jones and a generous supply of weekend--3 days to be excruciatingly exact. With a minimum of equipment and few marking gauges this Frank Klausz transformed 4 boards and a

bottom panel into a sharp dovetail drawer in about 20 minutes. He could have probably done it in 10 if he hadn't been so busy explaining to the dumbfounded like me. Rent it from Ronnie and ogle while your spouse is out of house. (This last statement is politically correct as spouse could apply to either half).

April 19-20 is the annual HGH Hardware Show. Last year they had some great demos, good food and free samples. The cost is something we can all afford--Nothing. Maybe we can work on them to give Guild Members a discount. If you have questions about exhibits or when lunch is call Chuck Meece at 510-4215.

Sorry about last issue, the only contribution I got was from Charlie Ard and he sent it all the way from his vacation in Jolly Old England (What a trooper!)--it will be in this issue --some things are worth the wait. And Ed Sheriff will get you rolling on the floor with his article about woodworking mistakes--it is so truthful anyone that has bungled a fine piece of wood will appreciate his comments.

A little teaser for the next issue, Charlie Brown, who is our main tool tipster this month has promised some diagrams of his folding stools that were displayed at the last meeting. Also I will give you a first-

hand report of clamp making--I'm going to make some of the clamps that Leonard displayed at the last meeting--with the exception of using thicker stock--I need some heavy duty clamping. Famous Last Words: it should work. I don't think I'm the only one who has the problem of not knowing what the finished product will be until I've made a number of them. By the way this goes for the computer programs I write. Never accept software from me on a dark and rainy night.

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## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

The program for the March meeting was to have been Shop Safety presented by John Tow. John had to cancel due to an illness in the family. I would like to thank Dan Browning for helping. Dan did a great job with the question and answer portion of the program. I think this week went well. Let us know how you liked it, and if you would like to see this done again. The April meeting is on Jigs. John asks if you have a favorite jig, please bring it to the meeting!

Ronnie Acton is having a promotion at the store. He is looking for a few good men to work part time to help with the high amount of traffic he is expecting. He has also asked the Woodworkers Guild to demo on Saturdays during the promotion. If you are interested in helping, please give me a call.

Monita Hara with the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind is looking for someone to make some stools to be used to train handicapped children. If you could help with this, please call Monita at 328-3989 or get in touch with me.

Don't forget HGH Woodworking Fair - April 19th-20th.

See you at the meeting,  
Mike

## A Timber Frame House in Kent

by Charlie Ard

The tiny village of Ickham, Kent dates to the tenth century but this house was not built until 1480, so it's called "New Place". A timber frame house on a brick foundation with beautiful hand made windows and doors, clay tile roof and flagstone floors. Many of the hinges and door locks were made by a blacksmith. There are fireplaces in every room, but the fireplace in the dining room is about 10 ft wide (big enough to roast an ox in). The wooden beam across this hearth is about 14 x 10, 12 ft long and nicely carved.

It is the wood beams and joists that I most appreciated in this house. Many of the timbers are deeply fluted and beaded to make a moulded effect in the ceiling. The center girder in the sitting room is very special even by local standards. Timbers like this are easily made as follows: select a stick of English oak from the pile the apprentices have been squaring up (in our case 16 x 20 about 30 ft. long) and rest it gently on saw horses the right height. With a long plane, joint all 4 sides nice and smooth and square. Twelve men could easily turn it on the saw horses after you finished each side and would cheerfully turn it back if you planed one side out of square. With the planing done the stick is turned on one side and a Moulding plane is used to remove an amount of wood equal to a 6 x 6 to make the flutes. When done this must be about the largest piece of crown Moulding in the world and this 30 ft stick will probably weigh 2500 lb. That's all there was to making it and 50 of them would make a good start to framing the first floor.

Timber cutting was not considered hard work like stone cutting and the pay was very low. It is not surprising that cutters were considered one of the least temperate tradesmen in England.

Charlie Ard  
New Place  
Ickham, Kent  
U>K>

Anyone for a weekend Moulding project?? Please bring your truck and not hand truck.

## The Mistakes I Made

by Ed Sheriff

Several years ago I decided to buy one of those random orbit sanders that many of the woodworkers were then raving about. Not only did I have to decide which manufacturer/model would fit my hands and work style best, but whether it should use pressure-sensitive or Velcro abrasive discs. To give it a try, I took a nice piece of walnut and proceeded to give the sander a workout. The wood quickly became smooth and actually became burnished--the smoothest sanding job I had ever done. These random orbital sanders really were all they were cracked up to be! Yessiree. Burnished all the Velcro hooks right off my new sander pad. I had forgot to put a sandpaper disc on the blamed thing!

Now not all my mistakes are so stupid or humorous, and I thank my lucky stars for that, because I make alot of them. Sometimes it becomes a contest with myself about who is going to prevail--me or my mistake-producing gremlins.

Soon after I finished building my router table I was moulding the edges of a jewelry box lid. When I do that job, I completely glue up the lid assembly of stiles, rails and panels which makes it easy to then separately mould the top and bottom profiles for the edges. So I ran the top mould all around the lid and it was a most perfect job--except that I had done it on the bottom edge. So my router table fence now carries a tag which says, "WHICH SIDE IS UP?"

After twice splitting my rosewood zero clearance bench saw blade insert by tilting the blade without removing it, my saw now carries a sign appropriately located that says "CHECK INSERT!" My band saw carries two signs saying "CHECK TENSION!"

Guess why. You would think that I've touched all bases to eliminate those mistakes. Not so! I am simply blind to those signs anymore.

Over the years I have learned to live with my woodworking foibles by making a challenging game of it. If I make a mistake, I try to correct it by making

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 PM at Acton Moulding & Supply Co. Information concerning the Guild may be secured by writing P.O. Box 506, Helena AL 35080 or calling Steve Onisick at (205) 942-8075.

## Tool Tips

These come from Charlie Brown:

### Tip #1:

When Adding finish to some projects, particularly small items, a board with nails driven through with a spacing to support the item can be quite helpful. I have found the little three legged plastic gadgets used to support the box lids by Pizza Hut for home delivery to do a quicker job. They can be bought from Pizza Hut for 2 or 3 dollars a hundred. It is more economical to buy them this way unless you have an extra large appetite.

### Tip #2:

I have found that felt blackboard erasers are handy and cheap for at least two uses in the woodworking shop: First, they are the right size for a 1/4 sheet of sandpaper and your hand. (They also have a soft side, the eraser, and a hard flat face, the backing.) Second, they are great for rubbing a finish with pumice or rottenstone. The erasers are available from office supply stores at just over a dollar. The best kind I have found are the kind with a wood block and one rubbing surface of about 1/4 inch felt.

### Tip #3:

As shown at the last Guild meeting (Editors Comment: if you weren't there eat grits!), use a V belt to practice the best way to fold a band saw blade. Hold the belt half way on each side with both hands, pull the two hands together, swap hands, pull the two center parts further apart and the top and bottom loops will fold into the center loop, forming three circles.

### Tip #4:

At the lathe or during sanding, if I don't have an adequate dust collection in

place, I aim an electric fan at the work to keep chips and dust out of my face. Of course, I still should use a mask and goggles. This is a relatively simple way to keep the chips and dust away from you, but it doesn't seem to help the shop much--actually works better outside pointed at your neighbors yard. (tongue and cheek by the Editor.)

### Tip #5:

Most woodworking shops have florescent lighting and the disposal of the dead bulbs is awkward and somewhat of a hazard. I have used panty hose to cover the bulb while striking it with a hammer to break it into a manageable size, then placing the remains into a paper bag for the trash. The procedure works best if you take the bulb out of the lamp first.

Thanks Charlie---these were great!!

Mike Key salvaged Tip #6 from some Guild NewsLetters he receives every month:

### Tip #6:

Try "Simple Green" concentrated industrial strength cleaner and degreaser for cleaning saw blades. It is non-toxic, non-flammable and biodegradable.

Members please send any tips for next month to me either at 703 Morris Blvd. ; Birmingham, AL 35209 or email me at my internet address: StephanO@stv.org.

Congratulations to Jessie Whitfield for winning that \$50 Gift Certificate. Once again some member missed out by not being there and some editor lost his notes of exactly who that was.

## The Finish Line by John Tow

Another old fashion finish in this day of high technology? You bet! It is as old as the hills -- but still very useful. You will need some orange shellac (3# cut), boiled linseed oil, spirits, Japan drier, and wax for these finishes. Home centers will have everything but the wax -- it can be had at your grocer's canning section. These finishes are not edible? They are flammable, however.

A few comments about safety. Most organic solvents are skin allergens at least and carcinogens at most, so wear rubber gloves while handling these materials. I prefer china bristle (apologies to P.E.T.A. members) brushes and clean them in mineral spirits. I use bulk colored dye-stable rags from a local supplier for most of my work. When through, always lay your rags out open to maximize the surface area since they will remain a spontaneous combustion hazard until they dry.

These finishes can be used on indoor and outdoor furniture. I use it on my tempered hardboard covered workbenches. Most glues (aliphatic resin types) will not ruin a treated bench top - - nor will that unseen squeeze-out adhere your project to your bench! They should be rejuvenated periodically -- as often as bi-monthly outdoors to annually indoors.

The simplest finish is just linseed oil. I thin mine before first time application to a workbench. I find that turpentine leaves certain woods (pine) less gummy initially than mineral spirits seems to. It can be applied with a rag or brush and should be flowed on quite heavily in the thinned state for the first coat. Remember: this finish is highly

flammable and the used rags will be a spontaneous combustion hazard, so be careful. Leave this finish wet for an hour or so before wiping it down. A second coat of just linseed oil a day later will offer excellent protection. Let it set for an hour or so before wiping it off.

Another simple finish includes shellac, shellac thinner, and linseed oil. Mix equal amounts of each into a clean glass jar. Shake the mess prior to use (it will separate) and flow it out thickly with a brush or rag. Wait a minute or two and then rub it vigorously with a rag dampened with the same finish. The heat generated will help it penetrate into the pores of the wood. Wipe it dry. Recoat when it is completely dry -- minutes to hours depending on the humidity.

I use the aforementioned finish on the lathe for everything from pens to candlestick holders. I dip a rag into the well shaken slop and then hold it against the work as it spins to load it with finish. I leave the work spinning as I lay the wet rag down. By the time I get a dry rag the finish is dry enough to buff with the dry rag. A couple of thin coats can be completed -- and even followed by a wax coat -- before you unmount your work from the lathe. Remember to care for your used rags properly -- they will be a spontaneous combustion hazard until they dry. Upon drying they will revert to just being flammable. Next time: harder finishes and wax.

**GOOD WOOD NEIGHBOR**

**Q&A**

Our good wood neighbor this time is Ken Walker. Ken has given us information about getting the DustFoe Masks locally for those who have been having trouble getting through to the folks in 1800 land.

Also there is no minimum \$25 order--it's a walk in place just off ValleyDale just before you get to Highway 31 on the left side--assuming your heading toward 31. I'm guessing they are only open Mon-Fri. I tried calling them last Saturday and got a recording. There address is: MSA Safety Equip; 416 Business Center Dr.; Pelham, AL ; Phone 987-8597. Someone call me before they go out there.

Scouting for a possible workshop to rent or share on weekends. My wife and I have decided we are condo or apartment folks after having lived in a house in Homewood for 8 years. I am searching for a solution to do woodworking primarily on weekends and not maintain the house in the style it would like to become accustomed. If you have any ideas--I have some mid range nice tools. Maybe we could work something out. Call me at 942-8075 or at work at 939-7041.

Someone in the Guild is selling a dust collector. I would be more specific but somehow that paper got away from me. Mike or I will be

glad to announce the specifics at the next meeting-if you see us beforehand. (If I only had Leonard's memory for details.)



the esthetic or construction design even better than the original intent. After bearing my many failures and rejoicing at my resourceful solutions, I had vowed to benefit my fellow blundering woodworkers by writing an enlightening and uplifting magazine article titled "Don't Despair"; but Sander Nagyszalanczy beat me to it when he wrote the book "Fixing and Avoiding Woodworking Mistakes". I thought my title was so much more catching, but he certainly had me with that name of his. And he must have made alot more mistakes than me since he filled a whole book. After all, how many woodworkers does it take to change a band saw blade? You don't know?" One to uncoil it (and that's another painful story), one to set the cool blocks, and one to (what else?) check the tension.

An artifice that I sometimes practice when I make a Big Boo-Boo is to draw attention to it. Yes, I emphasize it. Would anybody think that I'd draw attention to a (gasp!) mistake? It's kind of like designer clothing with the label on the outside. One project I did, I cut off a

member precisely 12 inches to short. (Have you read Jim Topin's book, "Measure Twice, Cut Once"?--they all do it.) No more wood with exactly the same color; and even if I had it, it wouldn't have the same grain pattern. What to do? Give it prominence, of course! So I cut some spline grooves in the ends and glued the pieces back together using some pretty purpleheart splines. Outstanding!! Now that's a fashion statement like Tommy Hilfiger's pants with the belly button showing on the belt.

Remember that nice maple workbench I built a couple years ago? Well one day I was drilling a hole in a member of something I was constructing. The hole had to be drilled all the way through; so, following my murky mental mandate, I did just that. Nothing left to do but enlarge the hole in my bench to three-quarters of an inch, drill it all the way through, and buy a hold-fast to stick in the sucker. Ingenious! You wouldn't have know it if I hadn't told you.

Did you ever install one of those keyed box locks that have to be mortised in? It really isn't too hard to do the mortising. But that keyhole is something else. You must drill the keyhole first and then do the mortising. But the keyhole must end up in the right place because if the key doesn't have equal clearance around its diameter, it's a botched job. Botch I did. So I enlarged the hole to equalize the clearance. Equalized it so good the key would fall out! Well, my solution was to make a

rosewood keyhole inlay and inset it perfectly in a tiny mortise over that ugly wallowed hole. Beautiful!

I could go on and on. My main squeeze has been putting up with my bumbling for 45 years, but she concedes it's OK. So long as I keep turning out beautiful wood things, in finality perfectly made, she'll keep me.

Hey! You should see my Chinese coffer, in progress! Cut the end panels one inch short #\*@\*!!

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