

OREGON WOOD WORKS



Tool of the Month

Inside this Issue:

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------|
| <i>Toys for Tots</i> | 1 |
| <i>Sand Between Coats</i> | 3 |
| <i>It's for the Children</i> | 4 |
| <i>Last Meeting: Guitars</i> | 5 |
| <i>What's in a Board Foot</i> | 5 |
| <i>Steam Up</i> | 6 |
| <i>Show Calendar</i> | 6 |
| <i>Goby Walnut: New Look</i> | 7 |
| <i>My Finishing Tower</i> | 8 |
| <i>Seminar Calendar</i> | 8 |
| <i>Shop: Frank LaRoque</i> | 8 |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

TOYS FOR TOTS

GIG LEWIS & BOB OSWALD

Jump on this bandwagon. This will be one of the greatest Guild woodworking projects ever. We will be turning your off-cuts and shorts into new toys for children in the local area.

At the July meeting, I wanted to start some kind of “easy” project for the Guild. I made a suggestion at a meeting. Gig offered the Toys for Tots option. On the way home from the meeting, it made immediate sense. A perfect case, an easy project, involve everyone in the Guild. I called Gig and said let’s do it. So.....

The Guild is participating this fall in the Toys for Tots program run by the US Marine Corps Reserve. It’s our next Guild “build it” project, open to anyone who wants to help build a variety of wooden toys. (See “It’s for the Children” on page 4

Since most of these items are made of small parts, it’s a perfect opportunity to build most of it out of your off-cuts and shorts. So if you can part with a barrel of off-cuts of any

kind, let us know. See the details in the following pages.

The community work will be on Thursday evenings, starting in early October.

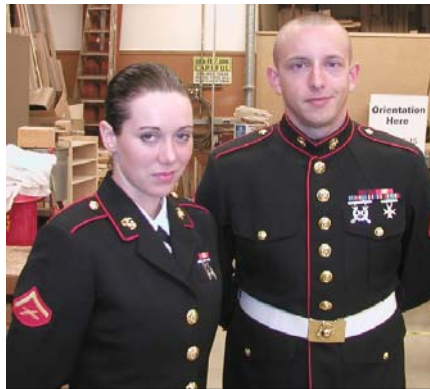
The toys being considered are pictured inside. We’ll refine the list soon and develop some drawings. And we’re open to ideas. The only requirement is that we will be finished the first week of December with a huge number of Toys for the Children..

Chuck Landers has graciously donated use of the Franklin school shop for this project time. Some of his students may also be helping.

Toys for Tots began in 1947 when Major Bill Hendricks, USMCR and a group of Marine Reservists in Los Angeles collected and distributed 5,000 toys to needy children.

No agency existed to distribute toys on a formal basis, so Bill started one. The 1947

(Continued on page 2)



Lance Corporal Mesa and Corporal Forrester. USMC Reserve

NEXT MEETING—SEPT 13, 2008 1:00PM (SATURDAY)

The September meeting will be a GUILD PICNIC at The Buchner residence, 18611 NE 184th street, Brush Prairie, WA. 98606

The Guild will provide the main dish (a barbecue) and pop and beer. Bring a dish to share. There’s no agenda. Just come and chat and lay back in the sunshine. The Buchner’s are wonderful hosts. We have use of the cabana by the pool, and you’re invited to use the pool. Bring a swimsuit. It’s a perfect setting to relax. Party starts at 1:00 and runs to about 5:00. By all means bring your spouse, partner, children.

Directions to the Ray & Dorthy Buchner’s—See Page 2

No board meeting.

THANKS FOR THE HELP

BOB OSWALD, PRESIDENT

I'm delighted to see a couple of things happening. The Toys for Tots program got off to a start at a meeting with the US Marine Corps Reserve unit at Swan Island. Gig Lewis and I met with Sgt. Espinosa and reviewed the program and what the Guild could do for it. And the kickoff at the meeting this month seemed well received.



Ian Welton and Ron Senger have stepped up to coordinating the Fall Tool Show. I'm very grateful for that as it's one of our core shows. We'll all work together to make that happen and will be calling on a few of you to help stand behind the workbench and talk to interested members about what the Guild is and does. I'm hoping we'll get a couple of new faces out of our membership to help. Old faces are, of course, very welcome.

Lee Johnson is an enthusiast for the Perl and is taking on the Art in the Pearl show. I finally made it down to the Museum of Contemporary Craft, to see the display he orchestrated. Sadly his own demonstration work had ended, so I missed the opportunity to chat and congratulate. I hope a number of you got down to the Museum. It was a very well done exhibit.

The Guild missed being in the Oregon State Fair this year. Not enough time and help to get it rolling. I'm personally sad about that, as that event is why I'm here today. My wife dragged me through the Jackson Long building those number of years ago and said, "There's a woodworking group over here you might want to see". I remember talking with Ariel, someone I didn't know then, someone who's an inspiration to me now.

So thanks to Guild members for stepping in to be more involved and share this love of woodworking. I have great expectations of what can come of the Toys for Tots program, 100 percent participation of Guild woodworkers... for the Children.

TRAILER TUNEUP

BOB OSWALD

Thanks to Len Walko and Juan Christensen for doing some needed repair work on the Guild trailer. Purchased by George DuBois, it's served us well in storing and transporting the equipment we use at the shows. Finish Line Carpentry donated walnut and other wood and shop things for the project. Our thanks to them!!

TOYS FOR TOTS (CON'T)

pilot project was so successful that the Marine Corps adopted Toys for Tots in 1948 and expanded it into a nationwide campaign.

The toys are distributed at Christmas to needy families, spanning all age groups from infants to teens. The non-profit agency formed to handle this program has become one of the most well recognized charities in the U.S.

Here's the great part. Toys donated for this program in the Portland area will stay in Portland. The local Marine Reserve unit distributes the toys to children from Southern Washington to Central Oregon.

"The mission of the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program is to collect new, unwrapped toys during October, November and December each year, and distribute those toys as Christmas gifts to needy children in the community in which the campaign is conducted."

For more information about the program visit www.ToysForTots.org

See the article on Page 4 for how details of this Guild woodworking project..

WOODWORKING POSITION WANTED

I am looking to work for a woodworking shop in north/east to central Portland. I am a graduate of the mastery program at Northwest Woodworking Studio, and have over eight years experience in very high end cabinet shops and four years experience in furniture making. Please email me at alexander@madronestudio.com, also you may see my work at www.madronestudio.com or 503-593-4423. Thank you. - Alexander Anderson

DIRECTIONS TO THE PICNIC

From North on I5, take the Mill Plain exit, 1/2 mile north of the Columbia River. Proceed north on the frontage road a mile to Fourth Plain. Turn east and proceed 4.5 miles, crossing I205. Continue East with the directions below..

Coming north on I205 take the WA state highway 500, also the Fourth Plain, exit.

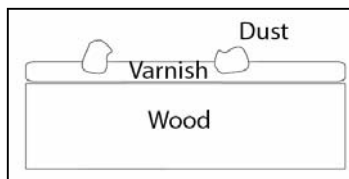
The Rest of the way: From I205, proceed East on 500 merging right onto Fourth Plain. About 2.5 miles from I205 to Ward. Bear left onto NE Ward. In about 3 miles Ward becomes NE 184th St. Continue 3 miles and turn right turn onto NE 189th Ave. About a quarter mile to the driveway, flanked by two big bears (?).

SAND BETWEEN COATS

BOB OSWALD

When you apply an “ideal” coat of varnish, there is no dust, and the surface will dry glassy smooth, a perfect finish. It may look ‘plastic’, but that’s the subject of a different article.

Dust is always in the air. The point here is that the perfect, glassy smooth finish ... will not happen. There are always small particles in the air, everywhere. One... two... three...four particles settle into that layer of varnish and dry there. Their little heads poke above the surface. They make a ‘bump’ when it dries.



To reduce this effect. You ‘sand between coats’. Sand does not mean ‘sand’. Sanding generally means, remove material to make the surface smooth. More appropriate here, we want to *remove high spots to make the surface uniform*. Why would you take off varnish or stain that you just worked so carefully to apply. We just want to remove the high spots. That’s the dust particles, the lint, the stuff that’s always around.

Your carefully applied coat of varnish is a bedding place for dust particles. They stick there. Sanding really means ‘polishing’. I think of using that 0000 steel wool or 400 grit wet sandpaper as a polishing compound. You are just knocking off the top of the dust bumps. You can also be slightly roughing the surface for the next coat. Typically the next coat will partially dissolve the prior coat making a strong bond anyway, so roughing the surface is only valuable if you are varnishing over something months old. You can’t get rid of the dust particles because they are embedded in the varnish. So you “sand” the tops off to make them flush with the finish.

I belabor this point to hopefully convey a sense of what you are really trying to accomplish, getting rid of that gritty surface you feel after you’ve applied what you thought was the perfect finish.

If it’s the final coat, sanding isn’t the best option. Rub out the surface with brown paper. Apply a light coat of wax if you like. You have a near perfect finish.

Another way to apply an oil topcoat, rather than ‘painting’ it on, is to apply it with a cotton rag. You can use a brush, but, you’ll be wasting a lot of it in the next step. The next step is to wait until it starts to set, about 15 minutes. Then with a clean cotton cloth, wipe the finish off. If you applied it thin, you’ll take off maybe 25-50%. If you brushed it on you take off more than 75%. But imagine what’s happening. The finish starts to set. The dust particles

have settled into the finish. But, you grab a rag and wipe it down. The dust particles get driven into pores in the wood, into the sanding grooves. They polish out. They stick in the rag. You wind up with a finish that doesn’t even need any sanding. But it’s thin, only the first coat.

However, after about three coats, there aren’t any more pores to wipe the dust particles into. The buildup of varnish, brings the buildup of lint. From here on, you need to “sand”, as described above. I use 400 grit wet sandpaper with water. 0000 steel wool works also well but I get a better finish wrapping with paper on a block. We’re back to knocking off of the bumps. So polish the surface and if you use water, let it dry thoroughly. Then on to the next coat of varnish

In about six coats you will have one of the world’s best finishes.

WHERE ELSE TO MEET??

BRIAN WARRINGTON

Now, I’ve heard it said that some people think we should re-name our Guild to be that of Portland, not Oregon, because we always meet in Portland. So help me out please.

It would help if some of you outside the Portland area could give suggestions for a place to meet closer to you. If a member in Salem, Eugene, The Dalles, Burns, or wherever could help set up a place to meet there, why not?

Maybe a Saturday mobile meeting, maybe just a Wednesday night regular meeting.

Let me know. I’m in the book (Website Board of Directors).

LIBRARY THANKS

RICHARD HALL

The Guild library would like to extend a very grateful thanks to our member David Cameron for his generous gift. Dave donated three boxes of his woodworking material so that all the members could benefit from those resources. They include issues of Fine Woodworking, Woodsmith, Shop Notes and Home Furniture magazines, as well as numerous projects and design books, and general woodworking books.

Once I get these catalogued, they will be available to the general membership for checkout.

Thanks again Dave. Your gift is really appreciated!!

Richard Hall, Guild Librarian

IT'S FOR THE CHILDREN

BOB & GIG

The next Guild woodworking project is to build toys. We've been in touch with the Marine Corps Reserve and decided to build toys for their 'toys for tots' program. Following are the details of the project.

What will we build

Small, simple toys. Educational stacking toys, puzzles, tops, cars, jewelry boxes, pens. The program is for small children to teens. On this page are a few examples. We will pick a few specific toys and make plans for each for the community project. If you want to work at home alone, you can request a plan or build what you prefer. Jim Hall thought he would turn some tops.... Outstanding. Any toy works. Turn a pen or tow. Build a simple jewelry box. They all will work.



Supplies

The wood gathering process has begun. Already a couple of our sponsors, have committed to supplying material. We will be gathering that material in the next few weeks. If you have off-cuts to donate, hang onto them. Either bring them to a work session, or use them in your own shop. If you want to help at home and need material, contact us.

When & where will we meet

There are three work group scenarios. **First**, a group will meet at Franklin High School on Thursday evenings, 6:30 to about 9:00. First session will be October 9. **Second**, you can work alone in your own shop if it's not practical to get to Franklin. You can work at home at your



I challenge every single Guild member to make one toy ...

leisure. With three months to go, you can start tonight. **Third**, you could team up with a couple of friends in your own shop for a few sessions of building. The end result of any of these approaches is that toys get built. Gig and I will collect and store the toys as they are completed, to deliver them all to the Marine supply warehouse in early December.

Some Woodworking rules

Plan to avoid exotic hardwoods for the toxicity issues. Start out with no finishes. Let's just build an inventory. We can decide on food grade finishes later where appropriate. No brads, screws, nails or mechanical fasteners. Ideally no small parts that, if they came loose would cause a choking hazard.

Success

Let's hit a Guild "out of the park, grand slam home run". This is a chance for EVERY member of the Guild to contribute to an incredible cause.

YOU can make ONE toy for the Toys for Tots program. If each Guild member makes just one toy we will have 100% participation and 250 toys. If 50 members make just 20 toys, we have a thousand. Gig had a vision of 200 toys that has grown to a thousand. It's easily achievable. If each member of the Guild made 5 toys we'd blow that goal. So I challenge every Guild member to join in. Build at least one toy.



So join in folks. Help make this a landmark activity for the Guild. For more information, watch future newsletters or call Gig Lewis 503-646-9760 or Bob Oswald 503-985-7137

Merry Christmas to All.

OUR LAST MEETING: MAKING GUITARS

BOB OSWALD

Show and Tell

Jim Hall shows a very complicated looking vase he turned. I think he said it wasn't all that difficult. Sure looks hard to me.



Alexander Anderson brought in a very contemporary table / floor lamp of his own design. He and a friend are building it for a non-profit fund raising auction. The hanging swag is woven to hide the cord.

Albizzia Tone Guitars

Jack Tucker spent a delightful half hour talking about production of guitars from a wood he's clearly fallen in love with. Albizzia, called the Tree of Happiness by the Chinese, has excellent acoustic quali-

ties. When dried, it becomes incredibly light, lighter than basswood, almost like balsa. A tropical tree, John finds it in Kauai, Hawaii where he lives. It's very fast growing, 25 years to 3 foot at the base. Growth rings are huge, yet it dries well and is a very stable wood.

Insets at the frets were made from black pearl, laser etched with petroglyph images. A great idea, laser engraved insets, that you could add to your own projects.

Guitar construction includes book matched face pieces with a large internal spline to make the body rigid. Keys and trim from Koa and the finish made it stunning.

I wish we had had an opportunity to hear this guitar make music.



WHAT'S IN A BOARD FOOT

BOB OSWALD

A board foot is technically defined as a piece of wood 1' x 1' x 1 inch. It's really pretty simple, but its interpretation can get a little complicated.

Rough cut lumber

When you buy rough lumber (as opposed to dimension lumber), it's measured in quarters of an inch. So a 4 quarter board is 4 quarters of an inch or one inch thick. And typically that's the 1 inch of the original board foot.

But even there the measurement is different from what's implied. A 4/4 board is a four quarter board right off the saw, but it may be surfaced one side to let you see the character of the wood. So it's usually available as 15/16ths thick. I believe it is the same as you go up in thickness, that is 5/4 is a sixteenth short of 1.25. and so on.

Now it gets tricky, at least from my limited experience.. How much is a board foot of 5/4? I'm going to fail you here and say I'm not sure. My engineering background would say it's 25% more board feet. You better ask the house. Most typically the lumber is marked and you can figure it out for yourself, how they are grading it. I would have done it for this article but ran out of time.

Like a 1x1x5/4 is 1 board foot times 5/4 or 1.25 board feet.

Processed lumber

The industry convention for finished lumber is 3/4 inch, something you probably know or assumed was true. It is a

finished dimension, but it started at 1 inch so. In the calculation of board feet in most shops, 3/4 inch is the same as 1 inch. In other words a 1x1x3/4" board is still 1 board foot.

To drag this on even further, when the finished lumber is perhaps 1/2" thick, at some stores they still call it a board foot as if it were 1" thick, although it really reverts to a square foot at this point. BUT the company position is that it's yes, it's really a square foot and we adjust prices for the different thicknesses and the processing required to make that particular lumber grade. . That's perfectly ok in my book.

It can cost more for 1/2" because of the extra handling. Usually it's the same price per square foot as 3/4. Stores struggle between when they are charging for a board foot and when is it a square foot, because it confuses customers.

WEBSITE STATUS

The website has been repaired and has been reliable for a month now. The Forums and Classifieds are disabled (you'll get a funny looking screen) because that is where the 'hole' was. Some address info may be inaccurate. PLEASE CHECK you account and update it again if necessary.

The forums section will get repaired as time permits, but it could take a while

STEAM-UP

BOB OSWALD

Do you know about Antique Powerland? It's a great non-profit organization on 62 acres in Brooks, Oregon, just North of Salem and right off the I-5 to the West. They have a marvelous grounds with many things to see and do. Browse their website one day.



Once a year they have the big Steam Up. It just occurred and was my first visit. What a joyful place. Steam tractors, fire engines, steam engines of all kinds doing all kinds of work, all kinds of wonderful things. Anyone out there ever seen a steam powered drill press? Totally unbelievable. Talk about your "Marvelous Toy". Here are a couple of shots of this years event to entice you next year.

Related to woodworking? Well, the drill press just mentioned. And they were sawing a log with a *Misrey Whip*, driven by a steam engine, for another thing. And for

another, they did an outstanding demo of a working saw-mill. Manually wrestling a huge log onto the carriage of a



steam driven saw, they made lumber. That lumber was straight-lined and then ripped on another steam saw. And then a steam planer brought took it the final step to usable lumber. A very manually intensive process despite

the power available to do the milling. I sat spellbound for a half hour. And the off-cuts, bark and such, were turned into kindling to fuel the steam boiler. A fully closed, self contained system.

Other things to see, antique cars and fire engines, museums, a trolley that takes you around the property, and for an event like this, plenty of food. Go, be a kid again.



GUILD SHOWS — HELP NEEDED

Guild Show Calendar

| Event | Coordinator | Dates |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Art-in-the-Pearl | Lee Johnson | Aug 30 – Sep 1 |
| The Woodworking [Tool] Show | Ian Walton & Ron Senger | Oct 17-19 |
| The Spring Multi-Guild Show | Bill Bolstad | Apr 24-26, 2009 |
| Museum of Contemporary Crafts | Lee Johnson | 2008 & 2009 |

Each shows needs a few people to simply tell people about the Guild. We have a simple document that can help you with that. Please contact the Coordinators below to offer your assistance.

Lee Johnson — 971-219-0839 Bill Bolstad — 541-327-2280
 Ian Walton — 503-841-5491 Ron Senger — 503-612-9612

CORNERING SKILLS BRIAN WARRINGTON

The October meeting will be about sharing our own skills. Just HOW do you turn a corner with wood? What tools and jigs do you have? What tricks have you learned through your experiences? Bring in your tricks, jigs, and projects that you have done, or are doing, and show them off. And come with your own questions and learn from what others know. Please, PLEASE bring in your favorite tool and show us how you do it!

FOR SALE

DELTA Wood Shaper, Model# 43-355, 1/2" & 3/4" spindle, 2-Speeds (7,000 & 8,000rpm), 115v, single-phase, 1 1/2 HP, reversible motor switch, fence, stand, bits, & manual, 180lbs, less than 2 hours runtime. \$380 Larry @ (503) 635-3008

This is 70% OFF original price of shaper, bits, etc.

WOOD — Cleaning house- about 40bf of ash and 160bf of white oak that is surplus to my needs. It is all local wood, rough sawn and air dried. It is at about 10% MC. \$300 for the lot.

Dick Pettigrew at 360-735-1791 or nemahpro@msn.com

GOBY WALNUT PRODUCTS, THE NEW LOOK

BOB OSWALD

A long time and dedicated sponsor of the Guild, Goby Walnut moved a few months ago to 5315 NW St Helens Road under new ownership. First I want to offer a very big thanks to Gary Goby for all of his wonderful support for so many years.



Art Blumenkorn is the new owner.



An incredibly likeable gentleman, just like Gary was. Very energetic full of ideas, and loves working with customers. I've been wanting to get over to see him and today was the day. Coincidentally that day was my birthday (19th), and it was a great present to tour the place with Art.

Located in Northwest Portland, just west of where Yeon turns into St Helens Road, south side of the highway.

The Main Yard

The entrance is at the west end of a long chain link fence, easy to miss the first time you visit. Entering the yard you're greeted by large, large stacks of stickered Black Walnut, the green drying area. A year per inch, stacks and stacks of lumber, awaiting the move into the adjacent kiln's. Two computer controlled electric kiln's are busy taking lumber to the next step.



Central Yard

The main office is located in the center of the whole area. Beautiful Black Walnut doors grace the entrance. In the lobby, a large display of lumber, surfaced on side to expose the figure hidden within. It's easy to make your selection... or it's difficult, so many choices. Wood that dreams are made of.



In the same building a huge warehouse houses lumber, and lumber and lumber. A new vacuum kiln is growing in use as testing techniques for the best process are being worked out.

The Machine Shop

The east end of the property takes you to the shop, housing quite a number of machines to mill lumber and produce roughed out projects for customers.



A number of large customers including Lee Valley and Thompson Firearms help round out the business. Art produces fantastically figured black walnut gun stocks, among many other things..



Big into conservation and recycling, Art is using all of the bark, sapwood and milling waste to heat the various buildings. It's also available for sale by the pallet.

In the shop they can straight-line, plane, saw, joint and do general milling and assembly. Art takes on projects that allow delivery of custom woodworking such as the counter top in the photo.



Inventory includes thousands of board feet of general lumber in nearly every dimension and application from lumber through instrument grade to veneer. The veneer wall shows you the various cuts and patterns available, enough material there alone to build a giant table.

For the small project builder, there are several large boxes of off-



cuts sold by the pound, gorgeous pieces in themselves, but suited for projects where you would hate to cut down a beautiful piece of larger lumber.

It's a great place.

Contact

Art Blumenkorn
Goby Walnut Products
Www.gobywalnut.com
503-477-6744

MY FINISHING TOWER

BOB OSWALD

Finishing, the perpetual challenge. There are so many options, and so many formulas that work. I'm looking for one solution, something that I can count on., that I don't have to think about. It also would help if it was fast. The formula following is what I've run into so far that works well, is fast, and might work for you too, in - the - same - situation.

While I prefer natural wood and simple varnish finishes, most of the world wants things stained.

Stain

Water or varnish, driven partly by the color you want and part by the medium. First thing common to oil or water, it takes two coats. Wipe on the first coat. let it sit 2 minutes, and wipe off gently to even out streaking and color intensity. Make sure it's even or it will be difficult to repair later.

Water - Pro—it dries fast

Con—raises the grain. Must sand after 1st coat.

Oil - Pro—longer work time

Con—Longer dry time. Allow 12-24 hours

Mid Layer

This is kind of optional and kind of not. If you put an oil topcoat on an oil stain, you'll lift the stain. Same with water. If you put a layer of shellac in the middle, it isolates them. It works. I prefer Seal Coat. It dries fast, so it's best to spray it to avoid over brushing it, leaving streaks. If you don't use a sealer, the alternative is to cross medium. Oil stain, water topcoat... darn, grain raising. Sand after first topcoat. Water stain, oil topcoat, no problem, just give it 24 hours to dry.

Top Coat

Varnish - oil or water? If you have a mid layer, it doesn't matter. The mid layer gives it the rich oil tone. Oil varnish won't do much more for it. You should go with water varnish if you can handle the short open time, but it's best is to spray it. Both topcoats are durable. Water again, dries fast. A second coat in 2-4 hours.

Oil adds a more warmth but it's 12 hours between coats, 24 hours before final use.

FOR SALE—WALNUT

Black Walnut, rough cut to gun blank shape. 2 3/4 thick, 11 pieces 30-40" long and tapered from about 2-3" to 6-8". Forestock blank pieces also. About 35 bf. \$125.
Bob Pearce 503-570-0704

GUILD SEMINARS

BOB O'CONNOR

Veneering with Doug Chamblin

September 27 & 28, 2008,
9:00-4:00, \$125 for members
\$160 for non-members. In-
cludes material fee

Discover the range of applica-
tions for veneer, from simple
veneer panels through a sun-
burst tabletop design, learn
the details of veneering from
expert. All skill levels. You
will go home with a veneered
panel that you can make into a
small side table.



an

Shaker Boxes with Kerry Walker

October 18, 2008, 10:00-4:00
Franklin HS, SW Portland
\$80 for members \$90 for non-
members. (includes materials and
lunch)

Learn how to make traditional
Shaker boxes. The class covers all
the steps from making bands and
bending to final assembly. You
should have a set of three boxes to
take home.



Invisible Repairs with Lee Johnson

November 15, 2008, 9:00-4:00
Lee's Shop in NE Portland
\$40 for members \$50 for non-members

Learn from one of the best, the art of fixing
those things that always go wrong on every pro-
ject. This workshop will give you solutions for
the most common mistakes. You should come
away with the skills to take care of your own
more common 'opportunities'.

Make Check to Guild Of Oregon Woodworkers
and mail to Bob O'Connor, 7632 SE 28th Ave,
Portland, OR 97202. See the website for more
information.

Basics of Fine Woodworking

By popular demand, this class has added two more series,
one to start in February and one in April. It's an eleven week
series on some of the finest instruction you can get.

Call Gig Lewis at 503-646.7056 to reserve a spot.



SHOP TOURS: FRANK LAROQUE

BILL WOOD

The Dalles, about 80 miles West of Portland up the scenic Columbia River Highway. I am on the way to visit the home and business of Frank LaRoque, professional woodworker. Entering city center I head south into apple orchards, Ponderosa Pine country. From time to time, a glimpse of majestic Mt Hood in the distance. Then a sign, "LaRoque's Wood Shop". Driving down a gravel road, a nice doublewide mobile home on one side and shop building on the right. As I walk into the shop, Frank is on the phone with a customer. He motions for me to be comfortable.



I am really excited about this visit. Frank LaRoque is well known in the Mid-Columbia area as "the" antique restorer. It is a real kick getting to know just a little more about this man with the big talent. I believe Frank to be a multi-talented artisan. He has taught classes on finishing, restores antiques, and is a cabinet maker. Sometimes while restoring an antique, he must make new metal hinges or latches and by "forging" the iron.

When he attends our meetings he usually comes prepared with something new and different to tell the membership about. I remember some time ago he came to a meeting with a jig made from two small pieces of plywood. The two plywood pieces were attached together to form a 90-degree corner. At that meeting he gave us instructions on how to use the jig and also how to make them. Today, he asked me if I had ever used mine and I had to admit, I had not. He gave me more of these jigs and was very informative about the advantages of using it

Frank was born in Minnesota, and at 7 his family moved to Nevada. He has been in Oregon for the past 29 years. He has been married for 42 years and says his wife is his biggest booster, supporter and fan.

In his shop next to the shipping and receiving door was an old oblong railroad-sitting bench. It was designed for people to sit on around the entire circumference of the piece. The piece was originally 14 feet long and was made around 1900 for the train depot at The Dalles. The veneer for the seat was 1/8-inch. Over the years, many people had broken through the thin wood of the seat and of course it has been unused for many years. The City commissioned Frank to restore it. He was also told to cut two feet off of the length so it would fit into City Hall.



He received it last October and today the finished restored piece is to be delivered to City Hall.

Frank's most challenging wood working project, after long thought, was that he could not think of one instance. The reason for this, he explains, is that he breaks each project down into the lowest-simplest terms and then he starts work on the simple parts. An example is the railroad bench. How could he make this piece less resistant to damage in the seat as it was on the original and still maintain the integrity of the piece? He turned to the Smithsonian and was told he could add to the framework under the seat without destroying its value as an antique. He came up with the idea to make a fiberglass frame under the wood seat as a hard base. And that's what he did.

Frank is also a self-taught cabinetmaker, in which he started his career. Early on he was a draftsman a skill he uses today to make house and project plans.

The LaRoque Wood Shop measures 30 x 36. His son built it when he was only 12 years old!

Frank told me his son is the best woodworker he knows. When I asked Frank how he maximizes space in the shop,

he replied, "Look at the pipe clamps and see if you notice anything different". He said, "I hang all of my hand saws behind the pipe clamps to maximize space". He replaces his hand tools on the specified wall hanger as soon as he is finished with it.

Frank told me he dislikes one aspect of woodworking. He wishes he did not have to charge for his labors. "Does that mean your prices are lower than other artisans", I asked. "No, my fees are much higher than other woodworkers", he said.

To sum up today's visit I would say I am overwhelmed with new ideas and his method of work. It is my belief we could spend a week in his shop and still not come close to tapping into the vast knowledge of woodworking he has garnered in over 40 years in the shop. Thanks, Frank for the visit.



The Guild of Oregon Woodworkers is a group of professional and amateur woodworkers like you, committed to developing our craftsmanship and woodworking business skills. The Guild offers many benefits for members, including:

- *monthly educational meetings*
- *monthly newsletter*
- *mentoring program to help members develop their skills in specific areas*
- *discounts*
- *woodworking shows*
- *network of business partners (the key to our development as members and as a Guild, providing additional learning opportunities)*
- *and a network of support.*

For information on how you can become a member, see the Guild website listed below.

GUILD OF OREGON WOODWORKERS

P.O. Box 13744, Portland, OR 97213-0744

CLASSES, SEMINARS, DEMOS, AND SUCH....

Northwest Woodworking Studio 503-284-1644, www.northwestwoodworking.com

Rockler Woodworking 503-672-7266, www.rockler.com

Oregon College of Art and Craft 503-297-5544, www.ocac.edu

Woodcraft 503-684-1428, www.woodcraft.com

Woodcrafters 503-231-0226, 212 NE 6th Avenue, Portland, www.woodcrafters.us

THE GUILD IS PROUD TO BE SPONSORED BY:

Emerson Hardwood**



Hardwood Industries **



Lumber Products **



Woodcraft**

WOODCRAFT
Helping You Make Wood Work

BARBO
MACHINERY COMPANY
Portland, OR • Since 1922

Barbo Machinery

Goby Walnut Products



ROCKLER
WOODWORKING AND HARDWARE

Rockler Woodworking

SUPPORTING:

Woodcrafters, Portland

AFFILIATES:

Northwest Woodworking Studio

Oregon College of Art and Craft

- ◆ Some sponsors offer discounts to current Guild members. See the website for details.
- ◆ ** Scholarship Sponsor

THE NORTHWEST
WOODWORKING
STUDIO

OREGON COLLEGE OF ART & CRAFT

Guild of Oregon Woodworkers

P.O. Box 13744
Portland, OR 97213-0744

We're on the Web!

www.GuildOfOregonWoodworkers.com