

St. Louis Woodworkers Guild



January 15, 2009
Issue 287

Our Next Meeting:

Thursday 7:00 PM
January 19, 2009

Woodcraft Supply Store
2077 Congressional Dr.
Maryland, Heights, MO

Next Presentation: Google SketchUp by Scott Wunder

Join president, Scott Wunder as he guides us through the wonderful world of Google SketchUp. SketchUp is an awesome (Scott's word), FREE 3-D drawing program that is gaining wide popularity from woodworkers to architects because of its strong portfolio of features and ease of use. Scott will demonstrate some of the basic features to get you off and running and also show examples of what is possible with this powerful program. He promises that you will be as excited as he is about this program and that you will not believe how well it works in spite of being, did he mention, FREE!

www.stlwoodworkersguild.org

At Our Last Meeting Surface Enhancements and Decorations with Matt Keim November 20th, 2008

The presentation for the November meeting was given by Matt Keim, a member of the Woodturners of St. Louis. For his presentation, Matt focused on the enhancement of woodworking projects with carving, texture and color.

Matt was introduced to woodworking at an early age, beginning with a father who taught Industrial shop for 30+ years. His own woodworking journey began with making speaker boxes. Later, he moved on to building high-end cabinets for home theatre systems, working mostly with plywood and veneers.

And then it happened. One day at a silent auction, he accidentally bought three lathes – an Oliver, a PowerMatic, and a Vicmarc. They carried a bit of sentimental value, being three of the lathes from the industrial shop class his father taught, but he didn't have a clue how to use them. He joined the Woodturners of St. Louis in order to learn how.

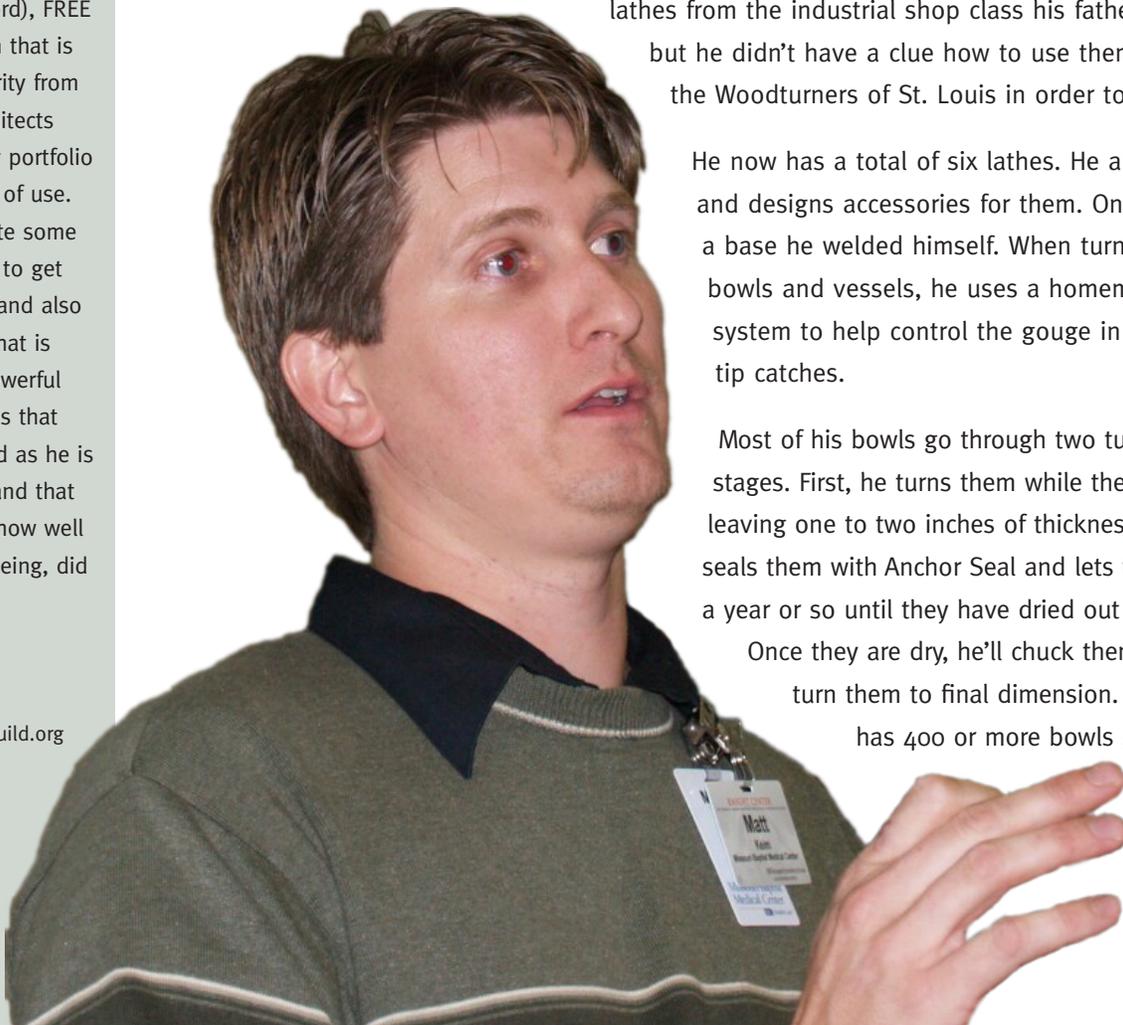
He now has a total of six lathes. He also builds and designs accessories for them. One sits on a base he welded himself. When turning deep bowls and vessels, he uses a homemade trap system to help control the gouge in case the tip catches.

Most of his bowls go through two turning stages. First, he turns them while they are green, leaving one to two inches of thickness. He then seals them with Anchor Seal and lets them sit for a year or so until they have dried out significantly.

Once they are dry, he'll chuck them up and turn them to final dimension. Typically, he has 400 or more bowls shelved in his shop.

*(continued
on page 4)*

Matt Keim



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*Meeting Room, Mailing Address
Courtesy of Woodcraft*

President's Article, January 2009

November's speaker, Matt Keim, briefly mentioned that he doesn't consider himself a woodworker, but instead a woodturner. The difference for him is that most of woodworking is straight, while woodturning is not. I agree with Matt. Most woodworkers, including myself, like straight cuts. We know how to do them. We don't even mind some work that requires shop-made jigs. But we get squeamish when the work isn't straight or the only jig we can figure out to make will take us three days to build and only make one cut.

I suggest that you blur the lines between woodworking and woodturning and think of the entire process as woodsculpting. Think of it this way. You start with a big chunk of wood and use various tools to whittle the wood away until a finished piece appears. We use saws to remove wood in straight and curved lines. Chisels remove wood from odd angles and when you can't use a sawing motion. Even sandpaper removes wood, though it is in very small chunks.

Now, as woodworkers we think of straight cuts as normal. Try to think of the straight cuts as a bonus and the freehand work as normal. Stop worrying about how to make a jig for every little move of your router and grab a chisel. Cut a tapered leg with a bandsaw and sweeten it up on the jointer (you don't have to have a taper jig—no one is going to check to make sure that all your legs match perfectly). Use a scraper to make a small piece of moulding instead of buying a \$50 router bit that you will only use once. There are plenty of places in your woodworking where mathematical precision isn't necessary (ask anyone who has a 42" wide tabletop that finished at 41").

I think you will find that when you start to think about your work as woodsculpting it will open up more doors than you ever imagined, especially when working on curved pieces. You will also find that it makes your woodworking less scary, more rewarding and enjoyable, and it might even save you some time and money. Happy woodsculpting!

Scott

Reminder...

Jeff Jewitt Seminar

There are still some open spots for the Jeff Jewitt Seminar on February 14-15, 2009! The cost is \$150 for the two days, including a light lunch and snacks, and the offer is now open to non-members. If you know of anyone who would benefit from a weekend class on furniture finishing, please encourage them to sign up (after you do, of course)!



I'm sure by now you are all familiar with our imminent transition from analog to digital TV. I hope so, 'cause at this writing the conversion date is a mere eighty days away! Though this incipient technology was actually developed over a decade ago, it has only recently received a crescendo of media attention. The conversion is mandated by our government, so they offer a subsidy in the form of \$40 coupons for households that need to upgrade via converter box. We don't subscribe to any service in our house; no dish, no cable, etc., so I decided to send for some coupons and convert.

The coupons arrived pretty much on schedule, and I planned to head out shortly thereafter to buy some boxes. However, I didn't decide which converter to buy until I watched a PBS special with Kevin and Norm (This Old House duo), which was scripted to have them visit neighbors and assist with their conversions. I did what they did and I must say, there were no issues with my installation. It went flawlessly, and we are now officially a DTV household.

So, by now you're probably asking yourself - what the heck does this have to do with woodworking, or a guild library, or...? Well, I found that with digital TV, broadcast bandwidth is far greater than analog transmission, meaning broadcasting companies can fit more information in the same general stream. So now, not only do I get channel 9 (9.3 actually), our regular PBS station, I also get channels 9.1, 9.2, and 9.4. What a thrill! While perusing these channels and combing some web guides to find out what broadcast schedules are, I came across an "old friend" of mine that I hadn't seen in years. Tune in to channel 9.1 on Saturday afternoons (2:00pm I think) and you'll find the Woodwright Shop, with host Roy Underhill.

I had watched this show years ago, but then KETC dropped it and I hadn't seen it since. Production for The Woodwright Shop is funded by a grant from the University of North Carolina, but I guess local viewing requires additional funding (and/or sufficient interest). At least now I know Roy is still at it. He may be a little heavier, may be a little gray, but he's still as rambunctious as ever. I realize most folks aren't into old-timey methods of woodwork, and Roy comes across as kind of cantankerous, but his credentials are actually quite impressive. He earned his undergrad from UNC, then received a master's from Duke University. He created the PBS show in 1979 (yep, been at it for 30 years) and has a brand-new book out too, after having authored five previous publications. He's considered the foremost authority on traditional woodworking techniques.

I've seen several episodes since tuning in to the digital station. The first showcased a master carver who deftly instructed how to carve simple embellishments, yet also had some finished pieces that were incredibly detailed. Another was a self-proclaimed "boring" show, which was all about drilling holes in wood. No big deal, until he posed a question - how does one drill a square hole with a brace and bit? I didn't think it was possible, but there's actually a device that can drill a square hole in a block of wood! Had I not seen it, I never would have believed it. The last show I saw had a blacksmith friend of Roy's, who talked about how to make iron hinges, handles, and locksets for house and home. I was captivated.

This stuff really fascinates me. I highly recommend you channel surf as much as possible to find out what pleasures can be found amongst all of the educational channels we now have available to us. If you're into traditional methods of work, whether it be Mr. Underhill or someone else, let me know. Maybe I can scrounge up some more stuff for the library.

Here's hoping everyone has a joyous holiday this year!

Library Reminders

The books, magazines, and tools of the library are there for the benefit of all of the guild members. Please keep that in mind as you check materials out and try to return them in a timely manner.

Show and Tell

Bob Colegate passed around photographs of wood sculptures.

Cecil Robertson put in a plug for a ShopSmith his nephew is selling and then asked for help looking for 3/8" thick pine.

Michael Olson talked about and passed around a few bottle stoppers made out of Osage Orange. They were made out of wood from a tree that was recently taken out of the Missouri Botanical Gardens and are available for sale in the MOBOT Gift Shop. The bottle stoppers were turned by this month's presenter, Matt Keim!

Jerry Lammers brought in free stop collars for anyone who wanted some. He also presented pictures of an old lathe and furniture he had taken on his recent travels.

In Memory: Jerry Balcer

The guild is sorry to announce that late last year Jerry Balcer passed away. Everyone was always happy to see Jerry and he always put a smile on our faces. It seems as though his light-hearted nature was perfectly displayed in his birdhouses that featured license plates for roofs. He will be missed.

Mark Adams at Columbia Woodworkers Association

The Columbia Woodworkers Association will be hosting a workshop with Marc Adams. They are looking for participants and have agreed to promote our Jeff Jewitt seminar through their guild.

Please visit the website below to find out the details.

www.midwestwoodworkers.org

from Stephen Massman
President of Midwest
Woodworkers Association

midwestwoodworkers@gmail.com

Surface Enhancements and Decorations with Matt Keim (cont)

Incidentally, he buys his Anchor Seal in 55 gallon drums. He then sells it to other guild members at the very reasonable price of two gallons for \$15. This is one of the great benefits of being in a guild! (Any SLWG members currently trying to work their way through 15 lbs of hide glue should take note of this!)



Matt likes to use carving and texture on many of his projects. Applying texture to a turned object forces you to look closer at the piece. He says the bowls with the extra details always draw the buyers in, enticing them to pick the pieces up. This, he believes, is the first part of making a sale. He also lives by the motto, "The less you can use it, the more you can charge for it!"

One of Matt's more common techniques is to use milk paint (mixed a little heavy) on the outside of the project and then follow up with a "V" gouge, creating random design. He generally doesn't practice this ahead of time, but occasionally tests a technique on an old bowl he keeps under a lathe for just such occasions.

If he is going to bleach the wood as part of the design, he will outline the area to receive the bleach with a wood burning tool. This prevents the bleach from bleeding into the other parts of the bowl. He has had interesting results with bleaching wenge – the black stays black and the brown turns white!

He also uses a Dewalt angle grinder on many projects. It is a very aggressive tool, so he is careful to take light, slow cuts. His favorite grinder blade is the Lancelot, which looks and acts a bit like a chainsaw.

Matt sometimes uses a blow torch to darken areas of his turnings. If you want to try this, he suggests keeping a wet cloth nearby. He also recommends you don't use this technique in the house!

When a piece is finally done, Matt photographs each one himself. He made his own photography setup, using PVC, a graduated backdrop, white sheets, and a couple of work lights with "daylight" bulbs in them.

If you are interested in finding out more about wood turning, the Woodturners of St. Louis holds a monthly meeting on every fourth Sunday, from 1:00 PM to 4:00 PM, at Woodcraft Supply. Members of their guild also meet up once a month to work on a group project. It is a great time for socializing and they always have a gourmet meal. More information can be found at <http://stlturners.org>.



The Best \$25 I Spend On Woodworking Every Year...

My yearly membership to the St. Louis Woodworker's Guild is \$25. For that small investment, I receive a fruitful and amazing return by way of contacts, mentors, resources, lectures, lessons, assistance, knowledge, opportunities and instruction.

Contacts: I now have a friend just 15 minutes away who owns his own sawmill and kiln. He sells wood for a fraction of the cost of one of those big box stores and sometimes offers woods for sale that I'd never find in a lumber store, like the board of quilted box elder I've squirreled away in the back of my shop. He also happens to be a full-time cabinet- and furniture-maker, so I have an excellent resource for information, as well. (Incidentally, his favorite technique for aging cherry is through the use of lye.)

Mentors: An even shorter distance away from me is another member of the guild who has taken me under his woodworking wing. I have access to most of his tools (which is nice when it comes to things like the wide-belt sander and the lathe, two things I have neither the money nor the room for in my small shop), but more importantly, I have access to his years of knowledge and experience. I learn new tips and techniques every time I'm in his shop. Together, we are exploring new areas of woodworking in which neither of us has any experience, such as veneering!

Resources: With my membership, I get full access to our guild's extensive library. I can check out any number of books or magazines for a month at a time. We have several hundred from which to choose and a few new books get added every month.

Lectures: Our 11 monthly meetings (every month but December) always include a lecture or demonstration by a professional woodworker or guild member. While they might not always involve something I will ever actually do (like how to build a boat), I can often find several pieces of useful information to take away with me.

Lessons: Although I hate to see my fellow woodworker get injured, I try to put their pain to good use by learning from their mistakes, rather than making them myself. Two lessons that stand out are when I learned how not to cut an opening into a zero-clearance insert and an improper use of a tapering jig.

Assistance and Knowledge: I now have a whole pool of professional and hobbyist woodworkers available to me at least once a month to ask for advice or assistance on a woodworking problem or dilemma I might have.

Opportunities: I recently took over the position of editor for the guild's newsletter. This gives me the opportunity to combine two passions of mine – woodworking and writing. All that's missing from the formula for a perfect job is a salary!

Instruction: My membership allows me opportunities for advanced learning, such as we had several years ago when Mark Adams hosted a three-day workshop for guild members. I was really excited to learn through such instruction I might not normally get to experience because of financial limitations. The following March, we had Frank Klausz come in for a two-day seminar. Again, I had the opportunity to learn from one of the great living woodworkers of our time. Coming up this next March is a seminar on finishes hosted by Jeff Jewitt – the learning never stops!

My \$25 does not buy me a tool or product to drastically simplify my woodworking. But with a little extra effort on my part, I can make that yearly fee affect so many people, including myself, that I will gladly and willingly pay for the privilege to be a part of such a community for as long as I live in St. Louis. If you are not yet a member of a woodworking guild, I highly recommend tracking one down in your area and checking them out.

This is from a blog entry by guild member Ethan Sincox. You can read his other blog entries at: <http://greystonegreen.blogspot.com/>

Calendar of Upcoming Events

January 15, 2009:

Guild Meeting. Using Google Sketchup 3-D software by Scott Wunder. President Scott Wunder will show you the power of this FREE and easy-to-use software. See how you can render your projects three-dimensionally for approval and to create shop drawings.

February 6-8, 2009:

Woodworking show in Collinsville

February 14-15, 2009:

Finishing seminar with Jeff Jewitt

February 20, 2009:

Guild Meeting

Recycled Furniture Contest

The show must go on! This month's meeting will also feature our recycled furniture contest. The contest was delayed because of a lack of entries, but this time the \$100 will be awarded no matter what. Just bring a piece of woodworking (or photo of a piece of woodworking) that was made from another piece of furniture. Make sure to bring your before photos to show where the piece originated. We only expect a few entries so chances are good that you could walk away with \$100.

It's almost time for the **St. Louis Woodworking Show** at the Gateway Center in Collinsville, IL! This year, it takes place from Friday, February 5th through Sunday, February 7th. We still need your help, from working shifts at the booth to bringing in finished pieces to display. If you have a project for the SLWG Table, please bring it to the January meeting. If you can help out by working a shift or two, there will be a sign-up sheet at the January meeting, as well. For more general information on the show, including directions and prices, please go to: <http://cms.thewoodworkingshows.com/cms/>

Membership Application

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Occupation _____

Type of woodworking you enjoy _____

Email address _____

Where did you obtain this application and learn about this Guild?

*If you would like to join the St. Louis Woodworkers Guild please attend our next meeting or mail this application and your check for \$25 for one years dues to:
St. Louis Woodworkers Guild, 2077 Congressional Drive, St. Louis, MO 63146.*

