

# St. Louis

## Woodworkers Guild



March 19, 2009  
Issue 289

### Our Next Meeting

Thursday 7:00 PM  
April 16, 2009

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

### Next Presentation: Tool Talk by Dan Coleman

Dan Coleman, an Industrial Arts teacher and fellow guild member, will give a presentation on tool set-up and maintenance, along with a discussion of safety issues and best practices.

## At Our Last Meeting Hinges Demystified with Vic Barr February 19th, 2009

Vic Barr is the President of the Greater St. Louis Art Association and in charge of The Art Fair at Queeny Park this year. He is also a member of the St. Louis Artists Guild and a juried member of the Best of Missouri Hands.

One of the biggest worries of the part-time box maker is in fitting the hinges for the lid. Vic's goal with this presentation was to provide us with enough information and some techniques to try to make us more comfortable with the process.

Vic started by going over the various types of hinges we might use on smaller boxes. This included back-mounted butt hinges, back-mounted round hinges, edge-mounted butt hinges, barrel hinges, integral pin hinges, and knife hinges. As a bonus, he also threw in an alternative non-metal hinge technique using strips of leather and hammered brass tacks.

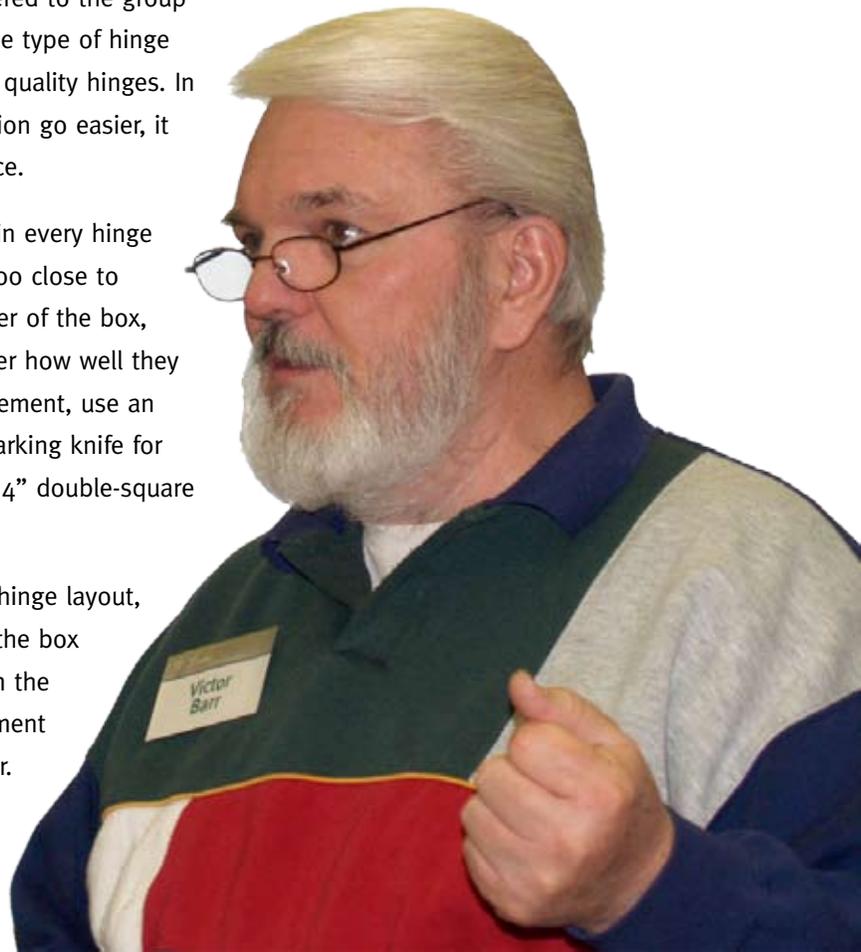
Several pieces of advice Vic offered to the group were applicable regardless of the type of hinge used. Always start off with high quality hinges. In addition to making the installation go easier, it adds value to your finished piece.

Layout plays an important role in every hinge installation. If your hinges are too close to the edge of the box or the center of the box, it just won't look right, no matter how well they work. When marking hinge placement, use an engineer square and a sharp marking knife for accuracy. (Editor's Note: I use a 4" double-square with great results.)

Once you have determined the hinge layout, measure and mark the back of the box before you separate the lid from the base. This will make your alignment of lid and base that much easier.

*(continued on page 4)*

Vic Barr



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Meeting Room, Mailing Address  
Courtesy of Woodcraft

## President's Article, March 2009

### Take the time to smell the wood

At the Jeff Jewitt finishing seminar last month we were encouraged to bring pieces of wood that were presenting us with problems. Jeff intended the problems be related to finishing, but a couple of members brought wood that they needed to have identified.

We spent some time looking at the wood, examining all the characteristics that could help in identification. Color, weight and grain all came in to play. Next we moved on to other clues like age of the samples (which would affect color) and from where the wood came (to determine if it was domestic or exotic).

Tom Tupper had a sample that looked like sassafras. We looked at all the above characteristics and then smelled the piece. It didn't have an obvious scent because the sample was not fresh. Tom's board was a scrap, so we cut it to expose new wood and a new scent. Sassafras has a strong scent, similar to Murphy's oil soap, and is indeed used as a scent in cleaning products. The smell test was conclusive and the scrap was confidently labeled as sassafras.

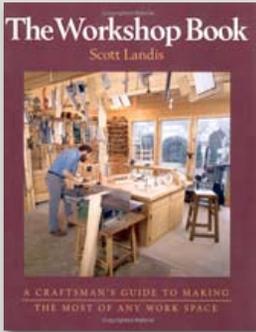
That is all well and good, but sassafras has a very strong, unique scent. It is easy to identify by the smell alone.

Next up was Cecil Robertson with his wood. We had the advantage of knowing that the piece came from Mueller Brothers sawmill in Old Monroe. They only mill certain species so it was already narrowed down for us. We looked at the wood and it looked like poplar, but they don't mill poplar at that sawmill. Cecil's piece was scrap, so we cut it and smelled the end. It smelled like popcorn, not buttered or salted, just popcorn. It was cottonwood. A lot of the time it burns in the saw and then smells like burnt popcorn. Not the best of smells, but it is a good indicator of what wood you have.

I didn't really ever think about using the smell of the wood to help determine the species, but after this, I realized there were a lot of woods that could be identified just by the smell. It helps to have a days worth of sawdust from one species in your nose for proper training, but it can be done. Other examples that came to mind were cherry (very sweet and fruity), hard maple (butter cream icing), white oak (wine) and walnut (bitter and burns). And these are smells that I can describe. Other woods have distinct smells that can't as easily be put in to words, but can still help identify a species.

Think about it next time you are trying to identify a wood, make a fresh cut and take a whiff. It may tell you what wood it is or at least tell you what wood it is not.

*Scott*



Definitely a “Fine Woodworking” book, this offering is Mr. Landis’ second product from preceding decades (1991 to be exact). His first work, *The Workbench Book*, was published in 1987 and is also in our library. Mr. Landis is a pretty incredible individual; he’s made his living as a woodworker for over twenty years, he’s a much-respected author among woodworking circles, and is a founder of W.A.R.P. - the Woodworkers Alliance for Rainforest Protection. All laudable accomplishments.

Before reading this book, I wondered how much could really be said about a workshop that hadn’t already been published? Well, much to my surprise, I found my explanation broadcast across a nine-chapter arrangement. While checking in at a svelte 224 pages, it provides a prodigious amount of information in both textual and graphic form. I was repeatedly amazed by the depth of knowledge this man possesses, and equally impressed by his dedication towards research and on-site visitations that culminated with this publication.

For me, some chapters were more interesting than others. In *The Workshop Tradition*, the Author delivers a thorough description of early shops - and I mean early, like 1600-era methods of work. Here he drops names like Roubo and Diderot, and compares differences between the work of joiners and carpenters. He laments that records and historical artifacts are very limited, and much is left to extrapolate. It’s also interesting to note how responsibilities among tradesmen evolved and shifted in subsequent periods. Also fascinating is how trade secrets were so closely guarded vs. a generally held willingness to share technique among today’s craftsmen (and women).

*Specialty Shops* was also an eye-popper. While I’m well aware there are as many “how-to” variants as there are people in this world, it seems I’m always introduced to some new idea when I investigate this sort of thing. Most fascinating are the shops of boat-builders, as many still seem to honor craft as it originally developed. He leads off with his experiences while visiting them, and I-tell-you I could practically smell scents of freshly planed wood, day-old coffee, and varnish wafting from the book! Many other descriptions are worth perusal too, as Scott toured workplaces of luthiers, chair bodgers, and even furniture-makers like Kelly Mehler to round-out this chapter.

After some quick web searches, I found Mr. Landis is also the founder and executive director of GreenWoodGlobal, an organization formed to train artisans, build businesses, and save forests, all on a global scale. As if all of this weren’t enough, I found his work with W.A.R.P. led to establishment of the Forest Stewardship Council, yet another group committed to responsible timber management. And I can’t stop without saying he writes well - very well. I don’t know what his educational background is, but he has a strong command of language and articulates his thoughts and ideas with aplomb. *The Workshop Book* is a great reference, on par with *The Workbench Book* I mentioned above. Having these in our library makes it that much better! This book will be available for checkout at the next general member meeting.

## 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

Brian Gilstrap started off the Show & Tell segment with a pair of mahogany side tables he made for his daughters. Paul Hanson announced he had a small amount of dimensioned white oak left over from a project and it was free to a good home. Cecil Robertson passed around several home-made depth gauges he makes and sells.

## Officer Elections

The officer elections will take place in April. The nominating committee has already been formed and it consists of Mark Koritz, Kurt Herrmann, John Wetter, Matt Laposa, and Bill Hobson. If you are interested in running for an office, or submitting someone else’s name, then please let one of them know!

## Shop Tour Coming Soon!

The next shop tour looks to be a cut above the rest! Join us on Saturday, March 28th, from 10 a.m. to noon, at the W.D. Quinn Saw Company. Bring a 10" table saw blade than needs a tune-up and get it done for free! Refreshments will be provided, as well. They are located at 1111 Belgrove Dr., Saint Louis, MO. You can reach them at 314-869-5353, [info@quinnsaw.com](mailto:info@quinnsaw.com), or check out their website at [www.quinnsaw.com](http://www.quinnsaw.com). The tour starts promptly at 10:00 o'clock, so be sharp!

## Last Meeting (Pre-Presentation)

We had a full house at the February meeting, with over 10 new attendees! It looks like the Woodworker Show might have paid off this year. In addition to the normal raffle drawing, we had two \$15 gift certificates and four bottles of Titebond II glue to give away, courtesy of St. Charles Hardwoods. (Please show your appreciation for such gestures by patronizing our guild sponsors when possible.)

## Hinges Demystified with Vic Barr (cont)

When using a chisel to chop your mortises, first deepen your scribe lines with the chisel. Determine the depth of your mortises using calipers against the thickness of the hinge. Make small chops across the area you're mortising and then cut in from the edge to clear the chips. Always make your mortises a little shallow; it is easier to go deeper than it is to fill the space.

When using a small router or a Dremel, use a 1/8" straight bit and a router-like base for stability. Be sure to practice before you work on the real piece. And finally, don't try to route all the way to the line – that is what chisels are for!

Vic always pre-drills for his screws. He marks the center points with a scratch awl and drills the holes just a hair smaller than the screw. He lubricates his screws with paraffin wax before driving them in to make them go easier. His experience with Phillips head screws has been bad, so he uses slotted screws when possible.

As Vic went through the various types of hinges he uses, he pointed out things to keep in mind with each style. When using the back-mounted butt hinges, attach the lid back to the box with double-stick carpet tape. When you place the hinges back on the back for layout, make sure and put the hinge pin exactly on the cut line.

Use this same technique for the back-mounted round hinges. When you drill your mortise, the center point of the bit should be on the cut line. The screw holes must be exactly in line with the center point and perpendicular to the top of the lid.

Integral pin hinges are made using brass pins as the pivot points. Carefully mark the location of the hinge point on both sides of the box. Assemble the box with tape and drill the holes through the side of the box and the lid at the same time. The diameter of the hole should match the diameter of the pin. Before assembly, sharpen the tip of the brass pin so it sticks inside the hole.

Vic ended his presentation with the demonstration on leather strap hinges. This technique might be something worth trying if you want to hinge your box lid, but are still not comfortable with any of the metal hinge techniques. But the next time you're making a box and you can't decide if the lid should slide off or lift off, why not give hinges a try? It just might be a pivotal box-making experience.

### *Ethan's Interjections*

"The Golden Ratio is about the same as a mile to a kilometer."

*Scott Wunder, February 2009 SLWG Meeting*

"Unfortunately, this bit of information is only useful for *really big* projects."

*Ethan Sincox, same meeting, about three seconds later*

## Jeff Jewitt Finishing Seminar Weekend



It was a dark and stormy night on Friday, the 13th of February. You would think that I, a 35 year old guy, wouldn't be anxious on such a night, but I was. Oh, it didn't have anything to do with the weather or the

date. I was on my way to meet up with Matt, our guild's secretary, and Jeff Jewitt.

I always get nervous meeting "famous" woodworkers. I was antsy for weeks before my David Marks class and almost skipped dinner with Frank Klausz the night before his weekend conference! But every time I've met one of these "prophets of the grain", I've walked away with a new friend and the realization that they are just ordinary people like you and me. Well... Frank still intimidates me, but if you've ever met him in person then you know why.



I thought about all of that as I made my way to Erio's Pizza and Restaurant, a great local Italian place not far from the airport, where Matt said they were going to eat. I'd called him earlier in the evening to see if they wanted anyone else from the guild to join them and he said they'd love to have me.

I didn't know I would get to meet Jeff until earlier that night. Heck, I wasn't supposed to be going to his seminar that next weekend! But through a series of fortunate events, I found myself looking at a Valentine's Day weekend at home alone while my wife visited her family in Ohio. So I did what any warm-blooded woodworker would do – I signed up for a woodworking seminar! At first, I was hesitant about signing up for a finishing seminar – it sounded a bit boring. But then I realized a good

finish is just as important to a project as joinery or design and that I could definitely learn some useful information.

I walked through the front door of Erio's and glanced around the room for just a second or two before I spotted them; they were an easy pair to find, being the only non-family table in the restaurant. I grabbed the chair across from Jeff and introduced myself.

I have to be honest with you here. As much as I say I'm intimidated meeting well-known woodworkers, I'm actually a very gregarious person. I am quick to strike up a conversation with a complete stranger and it was no different with Jeff.

It didn't take me more than a few minutes to figure out we were separated by fewer than the six degrees of Kevin Bacon. His wife is from a small town just a few minutes drive from my wife's home town of Akron OH. His mother-in-law worked in an Akron branch library for many years and my mother-in-law has managed all of the Akron branch libraries for several years and worked in the Akron library system for more than 30! We were both pretty certain they knew each other.

I tried to keep the topic of conversation away from woodworking, knowing that is all he would be talking about for the next two days. He said he tries to live a healthy lifestyle and several years earlier became one of those cycling nuts who gets all geared up with the special outfit and shoes and makes automobiles enter the opposing lane on country roads on Saturday mornings. He also said he wasn't a vegetarian (and then promptly ordered the vegetarian pizza).

The food was good and the conversation was great. After an hour and a half, though, Jeff wanted to get settled into his hotel room and rest up for the next day. I headed back to my house for the same reason, a lot less anxious and much more excited about the next two days.

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

**March 19, 2009**

### **Guild Meeting:**

Dan Coleman, an Industrial Arts teacher and fellow guild member, will give a presentation on tool set-up and maintenance, along with a discussion of safety issues and best practices.

**April 16, 2009**

### **Guild Meeting:**

This month's meeting will be an open-discussion forum on woodworking jigs. Guild members are invited to bring in jigs they've created and found useful in their shop for discussion.

**May 21, 2009**

### **Guild Meeting:**

Denny Krupinski will discuss woodworking with children.



### Jeff Jewitt Weekend Wrapup

On Valentine's Day weekend, 20+ guild members met at Woodcraft for a weekend of finishing techniques and tips with Jeff Jewitt. He covered everything from preparation with sandpaper and scrapers to rubbing out the finish with steel wool and wax. Reading about finishes in a book is ok, but nothing compares to hearing and seeing it done in person. If you ever get a chance to attend a Jeff Jewitt seminar, you should seriously consider it.

## Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Type of woodworking you enjoy \_\_\_\_\_

Amateur       Intermediate       Expert

Email address \_\_\_\_\_

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

*Mail this application and your check for \$25 for one years dues to: St. Louis Woodworkers Guild, 2077 Congressional Drive, St. Louis, MO 63146.*

