

St. Louis Woodworkers Guild



November 2009
Issue 297

Our Next Meeting

Thursday 7:00 PM
November 19, 2009

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

November 2009

Speaker:
**Spike Carlson talks
about his book.**

We've had a slight change of plans for the guild meeting on Thursday, November 19th. Spike Carlson, former executive editor of *The Family Handyman* and author of *A Splintered History of Wood*, is going to give a slide show/show-and-tell presentation about his book. He will bring with him, among other things, a slab of 50,000 year old Kauri wood, a box made by a blind woodworker, and a pencil with the alphabet chainsawn into it. His presentation will focus mostly on the interesting and unusual people he met during the writing process. His book will be available in the SLWG library by December, but Spike will also have autographed hard cover and paperback copies of the book for sale if you are interested

Introduction to Building Guitars

with Andre Strzembosz

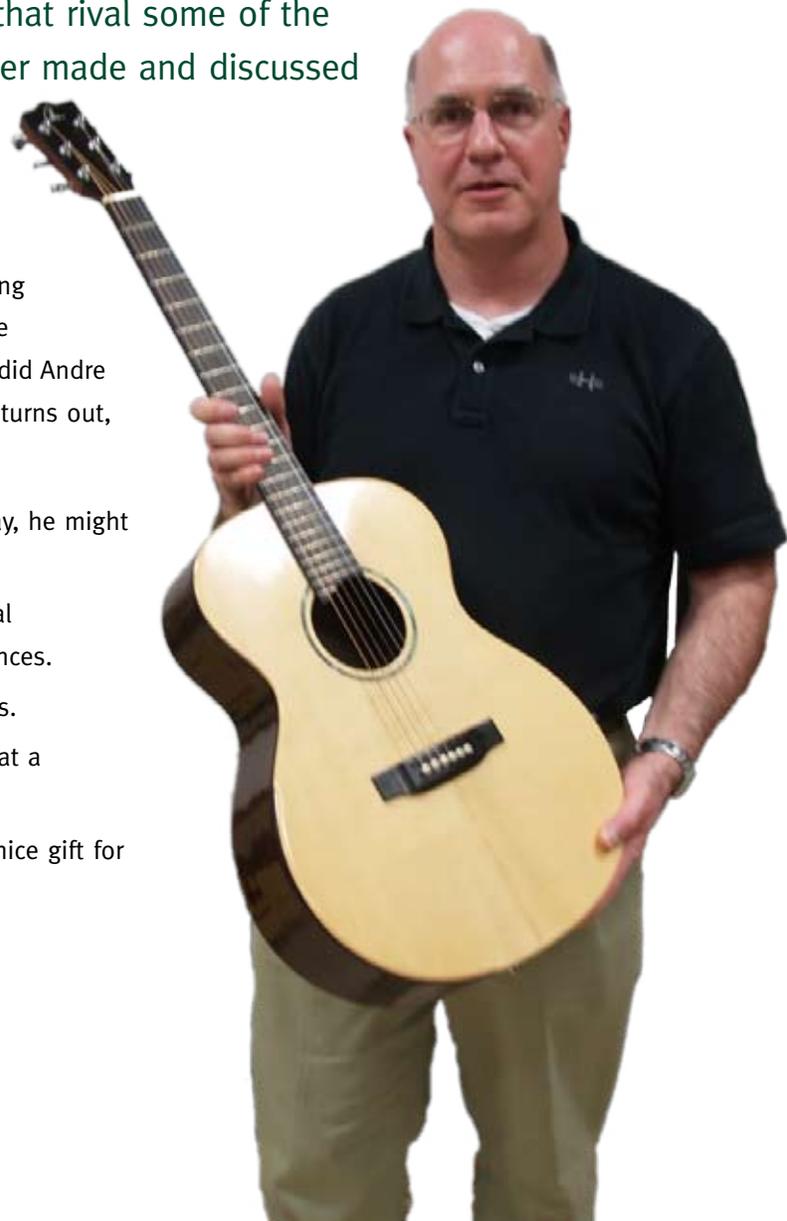
October 15th, 2009

The acoustic Dreadnought guitar was originally developed by C.F. Martin in the early 1900's. Since then, quite a few companies and individuals have copied this style of guitar in an attempt to duplicate the rich bass sound one can expect to hear from a Martin Dreadnought. Andre Strzembosz, a radiologist in the St. Louis area, presented several dreadnought-style guitars that rival some of the most expensive Martins ever made and discussed their construction with the guild.

Andre has already built three guitars by himself, is currently working on another three, and assisted in the construction of many more. So why did Andre decide to build his first guitar? As it turns out, there were several reasons:

- Although he doesn't currently play, he might like to learn someday.
- It was a chance to conduct critical woodworking to very high tolerances.
- He got to work with exotic woods.
- He wanted to see what went on at a woodworking school.
- And, of course, it might make a nice gift for someone.

*(continued on
page 4)*



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Woodcraft
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The Wood & Shop
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Hibdon Hardwood Inc.
314.621.7711

*Meeting Room, Mailing Address
Courtesy of Woodcraft*

President's Letter, November 2009

**150...320...Hut! Hut!
It's a snap.**

O.K., so it is football season, but I am not talking football here. I'm talking about making your sanding a snap. Conventional wisdom says to start sanding at a low grit, maybe 80 and then moving successively through the grits, completely sanding with each. This may be a five step process, with plenty of chances to screw something up in between. When a piece will be finished with a topcoat like lacquer or varnish, I have only two grits of sandpaper that I use 95% of the time, and I see no reason to use more. Here is my theory: Anytime you switch grits on unfinished wood you are adding to the possibility that it won't be uniformly sanded and therefore won't finish the same or will finish with scratches.

Keep it simple. Prep unfinished wood with 150 and sand between finish coats with 320 . Only use grits below 150 for shaping or large amounts of material removal. But be careful, these lower grits must be completely sanded out to 150 or they will show through as scratches in your stain and/or finish.

Sanding past 150 in the rough stage isn't necessary. After 150 you are basically polishing the wood, which makes a smoother surface, but adds to your work and makes the wood accept less stain. The surface created by sanding to 150 will end up perfectly smooth after applying the proper number of finish coats.

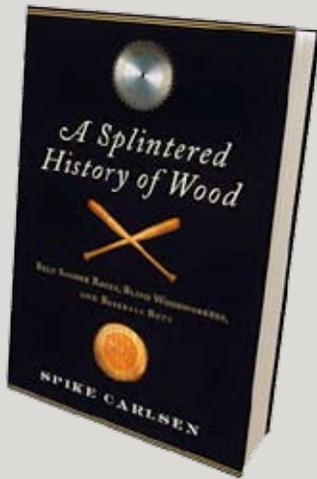
Between finish coats either sand lightly with 320 or scrape with a razor blade. Sanding with less than 320 (220 for example) will leave scratches in the finish and quickly sand through the finish and possibly the stain. I like to scrape with a razor blade where I can, because it only takes off the high spots, leaves no scratches, won't sand through the finish and won't clog like sandpaper.

It really is that simple. Orbital sanders along with the new generation of sandpapers (I like the Norton 3x) make it easy to use nothing more aggressive than 150 and still prepare your work for finish quickly. And, not going past 150 trims at least one more step out of the process. After the 150, use only light passes of 320 between finish coats and you are done. 150...320...That's it. Happy sanding!

Scott

Membership Dues are Due!

This last year, the monthly newsletter received a facelift to try and take advantage of new publishing technology and save paper while providing the guild members with a more interactive publication. Continue with us through this next year as we release the newly-renovated St. Louis Woodworkers Guild website! The new features and benefits of the website alone will be worth your \$25 membership fee. To pay up for 2010, see Jim Hoeller (or any board member) at the next meeting! Any members not paid up by February will stop receiving the monthly newsletter.



I like a good book where I can imagine the author is talking directly to me, like he's sitting on my sofa, enthralling me with story after story. That is pretty much how I felt about Spike Carlsen's *A Splintered History of Wood*. It isn't one of those books you can plow through in just one sitting, though. You have to read it more like you read Robert Fulgum or James Krenov – one chapter at a time, taking a break in between sittings to absorb what you've just read. You can't read this book when you're in a hurry, either. You have to approach it with a calm and relaxed mind; you have to be willing to be drawn away from your hectic day into a narrative about one of every woodworker's favorite topics – wood.

As you read the first chapter on extraordinary woods, you'll develop mysterious cravings and desires when Spike reports on where you can get 50,000 year old Kauri wood (I have some), discusses WOOD PORN with Mitch Talcove, and interviews people who make a living salvaging redwood logs. Later, you'll be awed by stories of woodworkers who are blind, artists who can carve your name in a pencil with a chainsaw, and an inspirational visit with Mira Nakashima. Spike then dives into wood as it relates to music and sports, detailing what goes into making a world class violin, a Steinway piano, a persimmon wood golf club, and a pool cue.

With a knack for making even the mundane seem amazing, Carlsen jumps into stories about wood used in construction, from people who live in trees to the 36-year remodeling project called the Winchester House. His chapter on weapons and war, interesting to anyone who ever played knights as a child, covers such topics as catapults and the English long bow.

He ends his book on a note he describes as, "emotional, environmental, and political." In this final chapter, which includes an interview with Patrick Moore (one of the founding members of Greenpeace), he details reasons for using wood more than steel, concrete, and plastic. He also discusses methods for maintaining natural forested areas while planting trees specifically for harvesting and his thoughts on purchasing endangered woods. I don't know – it all seemed like common sense to me.

If you want to find out more about Spike Carlsen and his book, you'll have two opportunities coming up in the near future. For starters, I will be adding my copy of the book to our library so it can be checked out by other guild members. But if you need more than that, then just come to the November guild meeting – Spike will be our guest presenter that night, so you can meet him in person!

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.

Announcements

The Society of American Period Furniture Makers (SAPFM) is looking to establish a regional chapter in the St. Louis area. For more information on the SAPFM and what it might be able to offer you, visit their website at <http://sapfm.org> or contact Gerald at sapfmgateway@sbcglobal.net.

The SLWG board members are looking for ideas. Are there any community projects in your area where guild members could offer their assistance? Do you know of any ways in which the guild could do something to better your community? Think about it! And if something comes to mind, please contact Scott Wunder, President, at 314-731-2484.

Toy Report

John Patton reported that another 200 toys were delivered during the month of October, bringing our total toy donations this year to 1700+. About 29,000 toys have been donated to four area hospitals and child care facilities by the guild since 1994. Thanksgiving and Christmas are just around the corner, so if you can make toy kits that would go along with those themes, please deliver them to the November meeting.

If you need patterns, wheels, axles or have suggestions for projects or want to turn in toys after the November meeting, please contact John Patton at 314-843-0616 or Steve Briner at 636-922-1947.

Other Notes

There was a total of 39 members and 1 guest at the October guild meeting. Donald Miller won the \$50 gift certificate to Woodcraft in the raffle drawing.

Introduction to Building Guitars (cont)

His first instructor was Frank Finnochio of Finnochio Guitarworks. Frank teaches five-day and nine-day workshops on guitar and mandolin construction and is recognized internationally as a teacher in the art of lutherie and guitar restoration. He also studied under John Ressler from the Design Stair Company. Most recently, however, Andre has been on the other side of the teacher's desk, assisting John Ressler with a guitar construction class at the Marc Adams School of Woodworking in September of this year.



At this guitar class, the students do not build 100% of the guitar – several parts, such as the sides and neck, are pre-shaped and/or cut to expedite the class. Likewise, it is expected that the finish will be applied by the student at a later date or that the guitar will be sent off to a professional finisher. In the class, the students assemble the back, make and attach the bracing, attach the sides, and sand the radii on the front and back. Although they don't glue up the top, they do cut it to shape, remove the sound hole, brace the top, and then glue the top to the sides.

Once the guitar body is assembled, the sanding begins. Eventually, the binding and purfling is added to the edges and the sides, back, and top are scraped with hand scrapers. The fret board is made ahead of time, with the fret grooves already cut. The students can add inlay or accent dots to the fret board as desired before work moves on to the head.

After the head is shaped and the sound keys are drilled, the neck is attached to the body and carefully adjusted for proper alignment and the nut is added to the neck. The fret is sanded down to micro-abrasive grits (no finish is ever applied) and the frets are applied and sanded to a slight radius and aligned. Before the finish is applied to the body of the guitar, the string height and layout is adjusted on the nut.

Once the guitar construction is finished, it still isn't completely done. Andre sends his built guitars off to a finishing specialist. Over the next few years, minor tuning adjustments will need to be made to the neck as the guitar relaxes and settles into its new shape.

The acoustic guitar you create in one of these classes will sound better and be of a higher quality than most guitars you'll find. If you are interested in building a guitar of your own, the Marc Adams School of Woodworking is offering another guitar class in June of 2010. The cost will be about



\$700 - \$800 for the class plus another \$800 or so in materials. The guitar you end up with as a result of that class will be worth several times that, however.

When his presentation was over, Andre asked if any of the guild members knew how to play the guitar and if anyone wanted to test out the guitar he'd brought in. Brian Gilstrap offered to play a little just to demonstrate the sound and quality. In doing so, he ended the October 2009 SLWG meeting on a positive note.



The Show...

Vic Barr brought in a box that had sides made with a piece of birds-eye maple veneer sandwiched between two pieces of cocobolo and a curly maple lid.

... and the Tell

Keith Lissant has been working out at Faust Park. He spent several days working on the old schoolhouse that was recently donated. He urged other members to give it a try if they were interested in putting their woodworking skills to good use.

The bi-annual Show and Tell is just around the corner! Join us on March 18th at the Creve Coeur Community Center and show off some of your finished woodworking projects! This year we will also hold a silent auction, so start sorting through your tools looking for duplicates and things you don't use and make space for whatever you might pick up that night, as well.

Calendar of Upcoming Events

December 2009

There will be no guild meeting during the month of December. Please have a joyous and happy holiday season. Merry Christmas!

January 21st, 2010

Steve Parisi will talk to the guild about carving duck decoys.

February 18th, 2010

Cecil Robertson will provide Part 2 of his presentation on making Windsor chairs.

More Announcements

Shop at Rockler: Get A Discount And Help the Raffle

Use your SLWG membership card to get your 10% Discount at Rockler. Every time you do so, Rockler will put \$1 towards a gift card we can use for the raffle. They will issue the gift cards to the guild in \$20 increments

Other Notes

Green Woodworking

In an effort to reduce expenses and save trees (for a more worthy cause, like lumber!), the Saint Louis Woodworkers Guild is now reducing the number of printed newsletters we circulate. Beginning with the August 2009 newsletter, any guild member with a valid email address will only receive a digital copy of the newsletter. Any guild members without an email address will continue receiving the printed newsletter as per usual. If you have a valid email address but would like to continue receiving the printed newsletter as well, or if you did not receive a newsletter via email or the USPS, then please contact Scott Wunder (314-731-2484 or wunderwoods@sbcglobal.net).

Frank Klausz Class Announcement

How often do you get the chance to work side-by-side with a professional woodworker? Don't pass up the opportunity to learn from one of the best and best-known, Frank Klausz, in March 2010. Attendees should bring sharp blades and a solid basic knowledge of common hand tools. After two full days, you will leave the class with a high-quality jewelry box made entirely with hand tools and a greater understanding of your tools and how to apply them to wood. Because this is a hands-on class, there is an attendance limit of just 16 people, so sign up soon! The cost for the class will be \$300 plus \$35 in materials. A \$50 deposit will hold you a spot in the class. Several people have already paid in full and most of the remaining spots have been held with a deposit. If you are considering signing up for this class, you should do so very soon. Contact Mark Koritz (mkoritz@charter.net or 314-579-0401) for more information or to sign up.

Faust Park Restoration Projects

Vic Barr has been working with the people over at Faust Park to come up with a list of restoration projects they could use assistance with. There are several buck wagons that need repairs, houses that require molding, siding and trim work, and rain barrels need help from anyone with coopering skills, just to name a few of the projects. Vic has volunteer applications available. If you are interested in helping preserve St. Louis County history, please contact Vic via email at vicbarr@sbcglobal.net or by phone at (314) 997-1181.

SLWG Mentoring Program

In an effort to promote the trade, the Saint Louis Woodworkers Guild is trying to organize a mentoring program. Are you looking for someone to help you advance your woodworking skills? Or do you have the knack for teaching and want to share your knowledge? If you answered yes

to either question, then contact Mark Koritz (mkoritz@charter.net or 314-579-0401) or Wayne Watson (workwood@earthlink.net or 314-846-1172) to get involved in the SLWG Mentoring Program.

Panasonic Drill Review *by Ethan Sincox*

When the batteries and chargers of our two 18 volt drills all died within two months, it became time for us to look for a replacement. I did my research and read all of the reviews. I made an honest assessment of what we needed around the house and in a hobby woodworking shop. With everything taken into consideration, I finally decided upon the Panasonic 12-Volt NiMH 1/2" drill/driver.

When the drill arrived (\$190 from Amazon), I immediately charged both batteries. I then put the charger and the spare battery back in the case and left the drill out on my workbench.

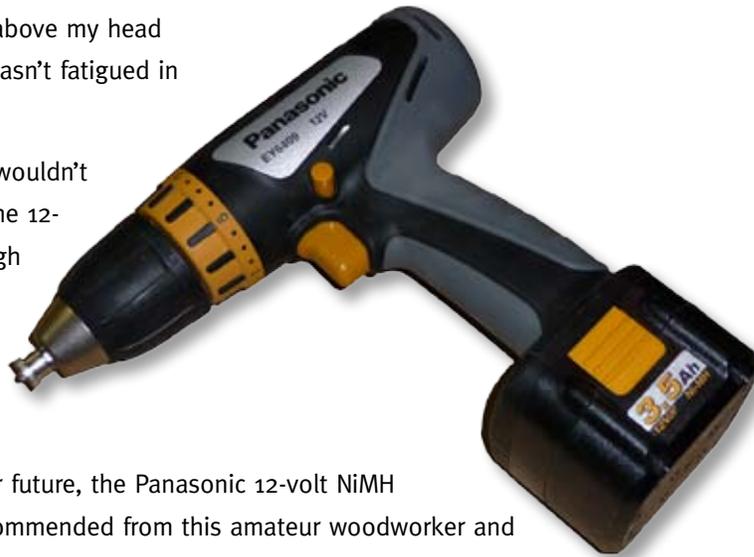
Over the next six months, I pulled it out for anything from hanging curtain rods to installing new hinges, from drilling 3/8" holes in wood to driving 100+ drywall screws. I finally killed the first charge on my first battery after about four months. I wasn't so much impressed with the amount of work the battery had performed as I was with the amount of time it held the charge! I popped the new battery in and went right back to work with the second battery as fresh as the day it was charged.

I was also impressed with the lighter weight of the drill. I could really tell the 3.5 lb weight difference between the Panasonic and the old Craftsman drill.

Even after an hour of holding it above my head for extended periods of time, I wasn't fatigued in the least.

If I had to do it all over again, I wouldn't change my decision to go with the 12-volt model. It is more than enough power for the likes of what I do and the lighter weight is a nice change.

So if you find yourself in the market for a new drill in the near future, the Panasonic 12-volt NiMH 1/2" drill/driver comes highly recommended from this amateur woodworker and average DIY-enthusiast.



More Announcements

Missouri Department of Conservation

The Missouri Department of Conservation has a website which offers a number of publications for sale, such as *Trees of Missouri*, *A Key to Missouri Trees in Winter*, and the *Trees of Missouri Field Guild*. It also has other publications available on wildflowers, shrubs, and birds of Missouri. For more information, visit them at www.mdcnatureshop.com.

The Kansas City Woodworkers' Guild Presents Marc Adams

Marc Adams will be teaching a seminar class for the Kansas City Woodworkers' Guild from December 4th through the 6th. Sessions will include Veneering, Joinery, Routers, and Methods of Work. The cost for all three days for non-members is \$150 or \$40/session. For more information, please contact the guild at training@kcwoodworkersguild.org.

Safety Recall

Ridgid table saws sold by Home Depot from January 2009 through July 2009 are being recalled because of a problem with the saw's arbor shaft when using a stacked dado set. Owners of this brand of saw with a manufacturing date code between CD0829 and

CD0837 should immediately stop using their saw and contact One World Technologies to schedule a free on-site repair. They can be contacted at 866.539.1710 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. ET M-F or by visiting www.ridgid.com.

Wood & Shop Update

Don Snyder visited the Wood & Shop the other day and brought back word of what Bruce has planned for his store. He expects to close the current location of Wood & Shop around the end of October; until then, it will only be open on weekdays. After that store closes, he is going to relocate it to 21505 Hwy 00 in Eolia, MO, which is located about 10 miles southwest of Clarksville, MO. The store will be located on Bruce's farm and he will probably have Saturday hours in addition to the normal weekday hours. If you plan on visiting on a Saturday, it would be wise to call ahead of time just to make sure. He can be reached at 314-739-0001 or by e-mail at info@woodnshop.com or you can get more information off his website at www.woodnshop.com.

Membership Application

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____ City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Occupation _____

Type of woodworking you enjoy _____

E-mail 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.*

