

St. Louis Woodworkers Guild



January 2010
Issue 298

Our Next Meeting

Thursday 7:00 PM
January 21, 2010

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

January 2010

Speaker:
Duck Decoys with
Steve Parisi.

Steve Parisi doesn't carve duck decoys for full-time employment, but you would never know it. Steve has a degree in graphic design and is a talented artist, whose abilities are highlighted in everything he does. He makes blocks of wood into some of the most beautiful antique duck decoy replicas you will ever see.

Join Steve as he shows you all of the steps he goes through, from wood selection to painting and distressing, to make the wood come to life. He will bring many samples of his work and ducks in various stages of progress for viewing. Even if you aren't a duck hunter you won't want to miss this presentation.

Spike Carlsen – Author of *A Splintered History of Wood*

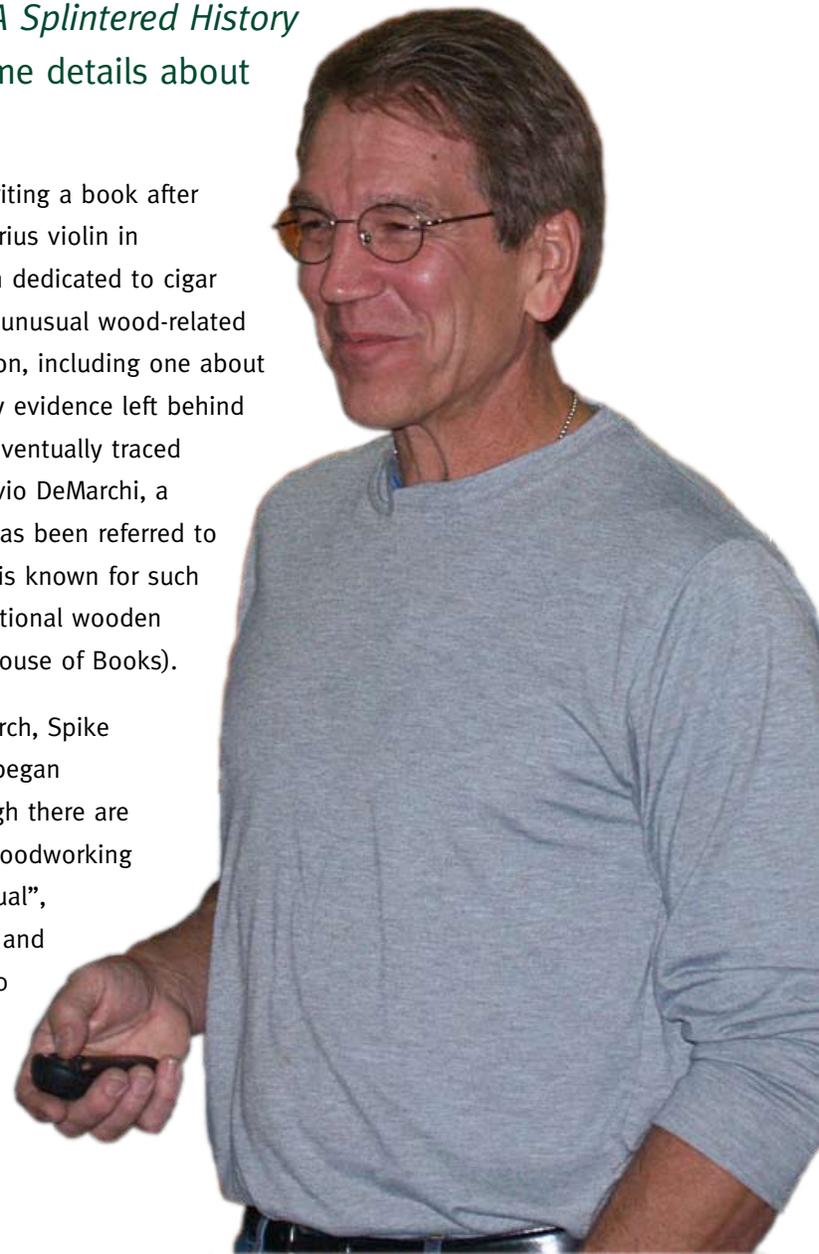
November 19th, 2009

Spike Carlsen is a resident of Stillwater, MN, and has a 30 year background in woodworking, including 15 years as a carpenter and several years behind the Executive Editor's desk at Family Handyman magazine. He has written articles for multiple publications and currently writes the "Ask Spike" column for Backyard Living. At our November 19th meeting, he took some time out of his busy schedule to speak with us about his book, *A Splintered History of Wood*, and give us some details about what went into writing it.

Spike first became interested in writing a book after reading an article about a Stradivarius violin in *Aficionado* magazine (a publication dedicated to cigar smokers). Shortly thereafter, other unusual wood-related stories were brought to his attention, including one about the Lindbergh kidnapping (the only evidence left behind was a wooden ladder, which was eventually traced back to the culprit's house) and Livio DeMarchi, a woodworker in Venice, Italy, who has been referred to as the world's greatest carver and is known for such works as a full-sized and fully functional wooden Ferrari F50 and his Casa di Libri (House of Books).

After quite a bit of work and research, Spike accumulated 55 stories in all and began compiling them into a book. Though there are other books out there related to woodworking that might be referred to as "unusual", none of them is probably so lively and entertaining (except maybe the 400 page book on toothpicks, right?).

(continued on page 4)



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Woodcraft
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Hibdon Hardwood Inc.
314.621.7711

*Meeting Room, Mailing Address
Courtesy of Woodcraft*

President's Letter, January 2010

What is a good wood to use outdoors?

I get that question a lot. Maybe you are building a deck or siding a house and you will need a lot of wood or you are just building a small planter for the patio and you will only need a board or two. Either way, you want it to last as long as possible. The cost of the wood may not even be an issue, especially for the planter, but you know that you don't want to rebuild it any time soon. So what is the first one that comes to your mind? Cedar? Cypress? Ipe? There are many other woods that can hold up outdoors including Redwood, Douglas Fir and White Oak. These are the ones that we all think of, but what about a couple that you wouldn't think of? I have two.

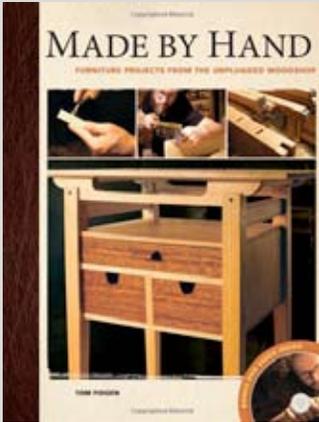
Cherry and **Walnut** are two woods that we use for fine indoor furniture, but we would never think of putting them outside. Well, it is time to start pondering it. Follow my logic. Walnut specifically, is the last log that I mill, unless it is super valuable and I need some fast money. I know that I can let the walnut sit...and sit...and sit, and it won't rot. Cherry is the same way. Between the two, I have never had a log go bad from sitting at the mill too long. Some have sat for years, not milled, not dried, sitting wet under other logs and they were still fine. I have run into many cherry logs with sapwood so rotted you can peel it off by hand and the heartwood is still fine.

You need to avoid the sapwood, but embrace the heartwood. This is not only the case with cherry and walnut, but with all woods that will be used outdoors. The sapwood is the live wood in the tree and, like all other fresh produce, it will go bad and much quicker than the heartwood. A good rule of thumb is that sapwood that stays wet will be rotted in two years or less. If it dries out after getting wet, like on siding, its durability is greatly increased. Wood can get wet, it just shouldn't stay wet.

So, you are thinking, "Scott is crazy, I am not going to put cherry or walnut outside." You are right I am crazy, about wood, but I have seen for myself that these two just don't rot. I have 3x4's at the mill sitting on the ground, wet, that have been there for ten years and are not rotted at all. It makes sense if you think about how the woods are built. Cherry and walnut are semi-ring porous, with cherry being more diffuse porous, but walnut specifically, reminds me of mahogany in its construction, and mahogany is great outside. The heartwood of these two will weather to a nice gray color, while just below the surface they look like new.

"O.K. So cherry and walnut are more durable than I thought, but they are expensive." Yes and no. Many of the more durable woods are quite expensive. Ipe isn't cheap, Teak is crazy-expensive, good Osage Orange is hard to find and pricey, Mahogany is up there. White oak and cedar are a little cheaper, but here is the kicker. If you are only building a plant stand, there is a chance you may have enough scrap in your shop of cherry or walnut and it won't cost you a thing. And, if you did have a big project and used cherry or walnut all of your friends would think you were really something. Remember though, all wood turns gray outside.

Scott



In late 2008, Tom Fidgen announced a book deal with Popular Woodworking. The book was to be a first – a book on hand tools that also provided you with six projects to work on and an educational DVD to watch and learn from. After some recent article publications with Fine Woodworking and Popular Woodworking magazines, and having followed his blog for several years now, I was excited to see what he would do in a book format. I pre-ordered his book and patiently waited. It arrived just in time for some scheduled “free reading time” over the holidays.

When I took the book out of the shipping box, my first thought was, “James Krenov.” Indeed, a side-by-side comparison of *A Cabinetmaker’s Notebook* assured me that was his goal. The binding was sturdy and the pages were nice and thick. The quality of the photography (all done by Tom himself) really added to the overall presentation as well.

The book is broken down into two basic sections. In the first section, he provides an introduction and covers a lot of the hand tool essentials, such as what tools you should have in a hand tool only shop, and advice on buying high quality vs. cheap. He also goes over some of his workbench appliances and spends a bit of time focusing on techniques and methods of the trade. These sections contain a lot of very useful information and are worth reading several times.

The second half of the book contains chapters that detail his six projects, including a traveling tool box, a bookcase, a wall cabinet, and a bed-side table. It culminates in a final project, his take on a classic sideboard. I’m not yet convinced the first projects are easy enough for the first-time hand tool woodworker to approach with confidence, but the other projects could all be completed with an intermediate level of skill.

From the perspective of a technical writer and wordsmith of 10 years, I must put some reserve into whole-heartedly recommending this book to anyone who wants to learn more about building furniture with hand tools. Though some people have commented that they enjoyed his conversational writing style, I found it to be quite distracting. After the first chapter, I had to make a determined effort to focus on the content of the writing and not the writing itself. After several years of quality blogs and magazine articles, it left me feeling a little disappointed. If you know this will be a distraction to you, as well, you might want to wait for a cleaned-up second edition. For me, the writing style is as important as the content, so I must give *Made By Hand* a B-.

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

260 toys were delivered in November and 404 toys were delivered in December, bringing our number of toys donated this year to 2364. The Christmas delivery was excellent due to a large number of Christmas snowflakes given to us by Cliff Rozar. Cliff was a member of the Guild for many years and an expert on the scroll saw. More than 29,700 toys have been donated to child care facilities by the Guild since 1994. If you need patterns, wheels, or axles or have suggestions for projects, please contact John Patton at 314-843-0616 or Steve Briner at 636-922-1947.

Other Notes

There were 66 people in attendance (55 members, 10 guests, and one presenter) at the November 19th guild meeting! Rich Sanders won the \$50 gift certificate to Woodcraft in the raffle drawing.

Spike Carlsen – Author of A Splintered History of Wood (con't)

As Spike went through some of his stories, he pulled out wooden items he's collected over the years. From his home town of Stillwater, he was able to save a piece of wood water pipe. These wooden pipes were turned round and then bored out, one end being slightly larger in order to fit into the smaller end of the next. After 100+ years of service and then half as many lying dormant in the ground, the piece he brought in was just as sound and solid as the day it was cut. Wood pipe is in use in some outlying areas of the US to this day!

He brought in a pencil, which isn't a great feat in itself, until you realize the pencil has the alphabet carved in it with a chainsaw handled by Mountain Man Murphy the Chainsaw Slayer. His turned wooden hat, made by Johannes Michelsen, is fitted exactly to his head. When Johannes asked him



to provide the dimensions of his head (width and depth) over the phone, Spike asked him how on earth he was supposed to do that. Johannes asked if he had a pocket door in his house and, when the reply was yes, told him to close the door on his head, pull his head out, and then measure the distance!

Another great sample Spike brought in to show us was a piece of 50,000 year old Kauri wood.

This wood cannot be legally harvested from live trees, so it is pulled out in tree trunk form from bogs in New Zealand. Much of this wood is very tight grained (over 100 growth rings per inch), knot-free, and comes in rich gold and cognac colors. With a glossy finish, it shimmers with chatoyance.

One of Spike's most memorable research moments for the book was a 20-minute phone call with President Jimmy Carter. President Carter has been a woodworker for much of his life and even had a workshop at Camp Lejeune during his time in office. When he left office, his staff bought him an entire shop of tools. He said he loves woodworking so much because it is a constant in his life. I think we can all relate.

Our meeting went a little long, but I don't think anyone minded. Spike's presentation was enthralling and we didn't want it to end. While we packed up the chairs and cleaned up the classroom, Spike sold autographed copies of his book off to one side. In fact, he sold every copy of the book he had on hand and left with orders written down for him to fulfill when he got back home the next day. For those of you that didn't know, Spike has pledged to plant a tree for every book sold. I think we might have started a small forest that night.



President's Letter (cont)

Here is a quick list of durable woods, in no particular order:
(1-5 are harvested locally)

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Cherry | 7. Mahogany |
| 2. Walnut | 8. Cypress |
| 3. White Oak | 9. Redwood |
| 4. Osage Orange | 10. Ipe |
| 5. Eastern Red Cedar | 11. Douglas Fir |
| 6. Teak | |

There are many others that are durable, especially imported species.



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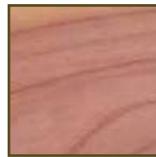
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7



8



8



10



11

Calendar of Upcoming Events

January 21st, 2010

Middle-zone duck season in the state of Missouri starts in early November. That gives you about 10 months to carve some decoys you can use to lure them in! Need help getting started? At the first guild meeting of 2010, on the 21st of January, Steve Parisi will talk about the process and techniques he uses to carve duck decoys. Whether you are an avid hunter looking to up your game or an avid carver looking to turn wood into game, this presentation should be of interest!

February 18th, 2010

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

March 18th, 2010

Don't miss our Bi-Annual Show And Tell! Bring some of your projects from the last two years, eat cookies, and visit with other guild members! The location and details will be announced at the January meeting.

Help Needed

After many years of fine service taking care of the library and writing book reviews for the Guild, Mark Gezella has decided to give someone else a chance to be Guild Librarian. The duties include keeping our collection up-to-date and harassing members to return their reading materials.

Also, Secretary Matt Laposa is relocating to the Owensville, MO area. He will attend some

meetings when he is able, but will be stepping down from his current position. We are looking for a new Secretary to fill this void. This position is a good place to start for someone wanting a more active role in the Guild.

If you would like to help out with either of these positions, please contact Scott Wunder at WunderWoods@sbcglobal.net so that he can get you going.

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).

Logs to Lumber – November 2009

The weather was perfect for both days of the Logs to Lumber seminar in November at Tyson Research Center. Guild President, Scott Wunder, led the seminar with the help of Secretary, Matt Laposa and member, Roger Branson. Scott talked about picking out trees for milling, which included an informative walk in the woods and stories from Roger. Before and after lunch, participants learned chainsaw techniques, including sharpening. As an exclamation point, Scott dropped a large sycamore stem after some tribulations with the chainsaw (for the record, he missed the mark a bit). Day one was finished up with an intro to the bandsaw sawmill, manned by Roger.

Day two was focused on milling, but began with a section on drying. After everyone knew how to make a good stack of lumber, they headed out to the sawmills.



On hand were two hydraulic Wood-Mizer bandsaw mills, one Lucas swing-blade mill and one chainsaw mill provided by guild member, Cecil Roberston. About ten logs were milled and the lumber was split between Tyson Research Center and those who wanted to take home lumber. Ash, hickory and sycamore were the flavors of the day, with guild member Tom Tupper getting the worst scoop. Every time it was his turn to grab a board, Scott handed him one that was worse than before. Cecil was a big winner and went home with a trailer load of firewood.

For the second half of day two everyone regrouped at Mueller Brothers industrial sawmill. There participants witnessed the operation cutting some of the 35,000 bd. ft. they process per day. Most impressive was the twin-band bandsaw with 10-inch wide blades that are

35' long (Mueller uses an overhead crane to switch them out twice each day). Owner, Randy Mueller, was very informative and showed us around the sawmill, log yard, warehouse, and dry kilns. They weren't running at full tilt since the lumber market is slow, but attendees still got a good feel for what happens at a large mill.

Everything went great at the seminar, including adding eight new members to the guild. Special thanks go out to Woodcraft, Rockler, Stihl, Mueller Brothers and Tyson Research Center.

Top photo: Scott Wunder dropping a Sycamore.

Middle photo: Scott Wunder demonstrating how to sharpen a chainsaw.

Bottom photo: Guild Member Roger Branson mills a log.



Frank Klausz Class March 20th and 21st, 2010

Santa Claus has already flown back home, but for 15 lucky woodworkers Frank Klausz is still headed our way! What will he be bringing us? Why his presence, of course! The plane ticket and room are paid for, so Frank is mostly set.

We, however, have a bit of work left to do on our side. Only two members have paid in full and seven more have provided a deposit to hold a spot in the class. Six more members have signed up but have yet to place a deposit, so their spot in the class is not guaranteed! If you wanted to

attend and didn't think there was room, then you still have time – just get \$50 to Jim Hoeller (314-721-2245 or catch him at the next meeting) as quickly as you can. If your name is on the list but you haven't yet paid your deposit, then you'd better do that soon before someone else steals your spot out from under you! The total cost of the class, about \$350 in all, is due before class starts on March 20th.

Do not miss out on this great opportunity to learn from an old world master! For more information or to make payment on a spot in the class, contact Mark Koritz (mkoritz@charter.net or 314-579-0401).

The Show...

Larry Alvarez brought in several Christmas presents he recently finished making, including four bud vases, several desk sets that included a magnifying glass, a pen, and a letter opener, and fourteen pen and pencil sets.

Kurt Herrmann showed everyone his boxes with compound miter cuts and discussed his trial-and-error process of finding the easiest and most accurate method (which was to make the sides square first and then cut the angles on them).

Walter Henderson made a mountain dulcimer by hand using various native woods.

Austin and Luke Carter brought in some tree and angel ornaments and a Rudolph they made and painted by themselves.

Buddy Carter brought in a jack plane he'd made by himself with imported and domestic hardwoods.

...And the Tell

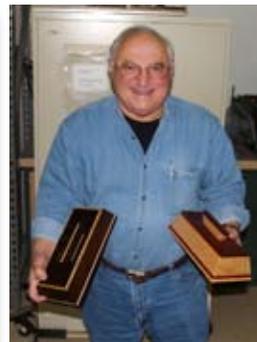
Cecil Robertson discussed a book called Chainsaw Lumbermaking and asked for opinions on the quartz heater he'd recently purchased for his shop.

Ethan Sincox announced his first official published article, *But Aren't You A Woodworker*, was in the December 2009 issue of Popular Woodworking magazine.

Dan Coleman is looking for cargo boxes or a truck (semi-trailer) body for a charity. If you are able to assist him, please see him at the next meeting



Walter Henderson



Kurt Herrmann

More Announcements

Faust Park Restoration Projects

The St. Louis Woodworkers Guild is teaming up with Faust Park to work on the numerous restoration projects they need to get done. We are looking for a guild member to be the main point of contact and help coordinate people and time as well as other guild members who want to volunteer their time and expertise. If you are interested in taking part in this project (especially if you want to take the lead!) then please contact Vic Barr. He can be reached via email at vicbarr@sbcglobal.net or by phone at (314) 997-1181. This is a good opportunity for you to keep your skills sharp between projects and even pick up some new skills in the process! It will also be a great chance for us to help preserve St. Louis County history and our active participation could open the door to new woodworking ventures in the future.

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.

Membership Dues are Due!

If you've received this newsletter, but have not yet paid your 2010 St. Louis Woodworkers Guild dues, then let this be your final notice! Any members who have not paid their \$25 membership fee by February 1st will stop receiving the monthly newsletter. Not only will you miss out on the monthly reminders, book and tool reviews, meeting updates and Ethan's horrible puns, but you'll also lose access to the Member-side of the St. Louis Woodworkers Guild website! Once the new website launches (hopefully before this spring), all paid members will receive their own login and password. With that in place, we will be able to better monitor the Member-side of the site and you will be able to post photos of your projects, write up a bio page to tell everyone about yourself, and access all of the past newsletters whenever you want. Where else can you get that kind of return for the low cost of just \$2.08/month?

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.

