

St. Louis Woodworkers Guild



February 2012
Issue 320

Our Next Meeting

Thursday 7:00 PM
February 16, 2012

Creve Coeur
Community Center
300 North New Ballas Road
Creve Coeur, MO 63141

Stair building with Kirkwood Stair

Brian Berger from Kirkwood Stair will give a presentation on constructing custom wooden stairs. His company works with domestic and exotic woods and most of their parts are shaped using a 5-axis CNC machine. As an extension of this presentation we are trying to get a shop tour with Brian as well.

At Our Last Meeting: Veneering with Martin Goebel

At the January 2012 meeting, Martin Goebel gave a presentation to the guild on veneering. Martin's formal woodworking education started at the College of the Redwood back in 2002. From 2002 to 2008, he built custom furniture in the St. Louis area. He earned his BFA in Studio Fine Arts from UMSL in 2008. The next year, Martin did design/engineering work at Thos. Moser Cabinetmakers. And then in 2010, he earned his MFA in Furniture Design from the Rhode Island School of Design. Martin is now the owner and production manager of Goebel & Co. Furniture, based here in St. Louis.

For many years, associating the word "veneer" with a piece of furniture was a sure indicator of poor quality, with the veneer being a thin covering to hide the true face of particle board furniture. It wasn't always that way. Using wood veneer is a technique that goes back as far as the Egyptians, and we all know they can build stuff that lasts hundreds of years, right? Only slightly more recently, it was commonly used by European cabinetmakers in the 19th and 20th Centuries as a way of adding decoration to solid wood furniture. Nowadays, the idea of using veneer to visually enhance a piece of well-made furniture without drastically increasing the price is once again becoming an acceptable technique.

Beginning with the most basic of topics regarding veneer, Martin first discussed what veneer is and why we might want to use it. Veneer is simply thin slices of wood. It can be plain, common, non-figured wood, but it is most often made of prized material – either highly figured or expensive wood. Commercial in the US, veneer generally comes in thicknesses around $1/32$ ". Worldwide, veneer thicknesses can be thinner – $1/40$ " or even less! Shop-sawn veneer tends to be thicker than the commercial product, averaging between $1/8$ " and $1/16$ " in thickness.

There are several reasons why we might want to consider using veneer in our woodworking. From a financial perspective, cutting a log into veneer, instead of lumber, allows us to get a high yield out of prized wood. This also makes the prized wood more accessible to people who might not normally be able to afford something like quilted mahogany or Macassar Ebony. From a design perspective, veneer allows us to do things with wood that we might not normally be able to do. When using high quality veneered plywood, we can worry less about wood movement and the impact it has on the piece. We can use it to create pattern, whether it is a repeating grain pattern, to provide an overall sense of continuity, or a functional alternating pattern, as might be found on something like a chess board.



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314.621.7711

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636.485.5217

Wayne's Sawdust February 2012

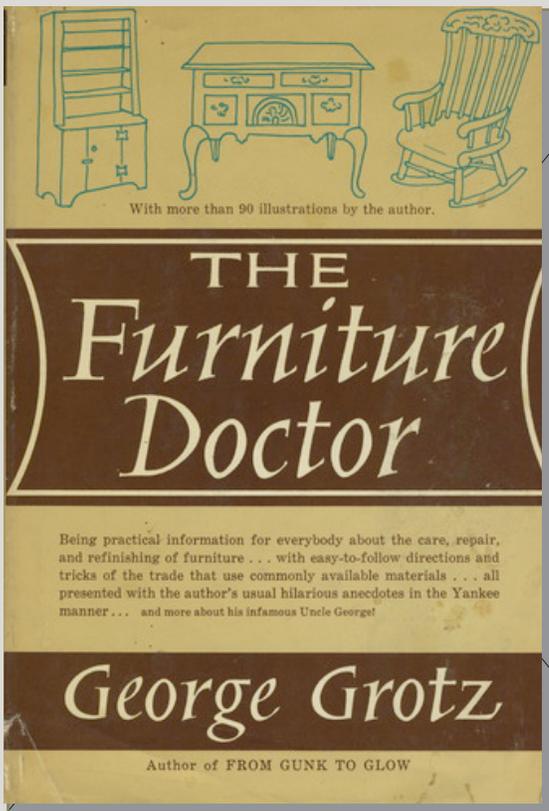
From my observation, our participation at the Woodworking Show in Collinsville was a huge success. Rich Weitzman pulled together a wonderful exhibit. Our display was a stand out, in large part, due to Mark Koritz, for his generous loan of his display equipment. It really made a difference in our presentation. But the real stars were the members that loaned us larger pieces of furniture and other items to showcase the wide range of talent that we as a Guild are so fortunate to possess. The displays only tell part of the story, of course. The Guild members who volunteered their time to talk to prospective new members was absolutely invaluable. I was also surprised at the number of prospective members who had gone to our website prior to attending the show. The Woodworking Show website had a link to our website and I believe it made a significant impact upon the number of people who expressed interest in our Guild while at the show. Again thanks to all of you who helped make this show such a success.

February marks a milestone in that a Nominating Committee has been established to put together a slate of candidates for the 2012 Officers and Directors. The Nominating Committee is Mike Sistek (Chairman), Vic Barr, Bob Brinkman, Dan Coleman and Al Hayden. If you are interested in holding an office or wish to nominate someone, contact one of the Nominating Committee members and let them know. This year we are pushing the actual election back to May's meeting. We are unable to meet at the Creve Coeur Government Center in April. Mike Sistek is working on an alternate Saturday meeting so the Board of Directors thought it best to wait to hold the election at our regular meeting time and place.

For those interested, my trip to Colonial Williamsburg to attend the "Working Wood in the 18th Century" conference was a superb experience. The invited presenters were Dan Faia, head of the cabinet and furniture making department, at the North Bennet Street School in Boston, Jeff Headley and Steve Hamilton, who have built furniture for the White House and State Department along with Kaare Loftheim and Mack Headley from The Hay Cabinet Shop at Colonial Williamsburg. The opportunity to learn from these craftsmen was a true treat. I can't wait to go back next year!

Wayne

Book Review: *The Furniture Doctor* by George Grotz by Ethan Sincox



The book I chose for this month's review is an old one. *The Furniture Doctor* was originally published in 1962. But the nice thing about reference books like this is that the techniques rarely change and, likewise, have rarely been improved upon when the original advice is sound.

The biggest boon to this book is his writing style; it is very casual and conversational. He tries to make the discussion of furniture restoration and repair fun, with humorous topic headings and stories about his Uncle George. As you read through a discussion on using polish vs. wax, you feel as if you're sitting in your workshop, talking to an old friend with lots of good advice you know you should follow.

George wrote this book not to be read straight through in one sitting, but to be an answer source for specific questions. Therefore, the book is broken down into

useful chapters that do not need to be read in order. Chapters include a variety of topics, like restoring finishes, making repairs to old furniture, bleaching, staining, and even "antiquing" a newly build piece.

As with many other things in woodworking, you should use caution when trying some of his techniques. He occasionally calls for dangerous chemicals (that might not have been considered dangerous back in 1962)

Of course, the other good thing about this book is that he gives you several different options in many cases, so you can use the technique that feels safest to you.

Other bits of information in the book haven't quite survived the ravages of time. In the first chapter, he talks about places where you might find antiques for purchasing, like estate sales and antique stores. These days, it is getting more and more difficult to find any kind of bargains at these places because people have become more informed (via the internet).

I do not know if the guild library has a copy of this book or not. If they don't, I recently picked up a second copy I can donate. I found it at an estate sale for \$2.50. It was a real bargain!

Announcements

Upcoming Meetings

March 15 - The March meeting will be our annual show-and-tell and silent auction. Details for the requirements of both the show-and-tell and the silent auction will be forthcoming.

January Attendance

There were a total of 52 people in attendance at the November meeting.

Raffle Winners

Congratulations to Kurt Herrmann who won the \$50 gift certificate from Woodcraft!

Toy Report

Our friend C. Gorla gave us a significant gift this month and helped us make a nice delivery of 150 toys. Spring is on the way so bird houses and animal kits are great items along with rabbit kits, butterflies, coyotes, cats, Tulips and other flowers, and cars. This is a great time to join the toy group.

If you need patterns see our web site to select and print a pattern or you may call and we will send you the patterns by mail. We really need about 20 each of any craft pattern you select.

You may call John at 314-843-0616 or Steve at 636-922-1947 for any of the above or to arrange pickup or delivery.

Guild Library

Have you checked out the guild library lately? Our new librarian, Kevin Wieser, can bring requested items to the next meeting if you're interested in checking something out. If you have had something checked out for an extended period of time, please bring it back so that others might be able to use it. Finally, as you are cleaning up and organizing your own woodworking library (New Year's Resolution #41), consider donating any unwanted or duplicate books to the guild library!

Veneering with Martin Goebel

(continued from cover)

Commercial veneers can be produced several ways. The most common method is rotary cutting, where an incredibly sharp edge slices the wood off the log as the log rotates. This produces a consistent grain pattern. Flat slicing is another technique used with more common woods to create non-exceptional veneers. If the wood is highly figured, like birds-eye maple or curly mahogany, a technique called back cutting is used to get the most yield of exceptional figure. This is similar to rotary cutting, only on a smaller section of log.

Shop-sawn veneer is almost exclusively cut on a bandsaw using a resaw blade. The size of veneer you can make in your shop is not dictated by the size of your bandsaw's resawing capacity, but by the size of your jointer, as you need to rejoin the face each time you resaw. Of course, if you are comfortable with using hand planes, then you could resaw a slightly thicker veneer that is wider than your jointer and rejoin the face by hand.

If you are abutting two pieces of veneer together, you will need to joint the edges first. In a commercial environment, veneer saws or knives make quick work of this task. In the home shop, this is more easily accomplished with a jointer (power or hand), with the veneers pressed together between two sheets of plywood, or a router. Once they are jointed and ready for assembly, a process called "taping" keeps them together until they are attached to the substrate. Commercially, white veneer tape is used on the show side (and then sanded off after assembly). In our workshops, it is much more common to see blue painter's tape.

One of the biggest factors in the use of veneer being equated to poor quality was the use of substandard substrates. Particle board is the worst substrate one could use for furniture construction and it doesn't get any better with a thin sheet of wood glued to it. Don't cheap out on your substrate! The best substrate you can use is Baltic birch plywood, commonly available in 5' x 5' dimensions, but now also available in 4' x 8' sheets. Domestic cabinet-grade birch is a good second choice if Baltic birch plywood is not available or cost prohibitive. If there is little concern with moisture, MDF can be used. Using a less expensive solid lumber core is also an option.

When it comes to veneering, not all glue is created equal. You want to try and use glues with longer open times to reduce veneer gluing stress. Urea/resin glues are good, as are some PVA glues (Titebond I and II are fine, but do not use Titebond III) and hide glues (make your own, don't use store-bought hide glue). Bad choices include epoxy (overkill and very expensive), contact cement (too weak), and polyurethane glues (too hard to clean up). When gluing up a flat piece of veneer to a flat substrate, the standard process is to sandwich the veneered piece between plastic and cauls and use a lot of clamps to apply the pressure. If you are doing bent laminations or curved pieces, a more effective method would be to use a vacuum press.

Martin ended by discussing a few odds and ends we should consider when using veneers. Try to veneer edges before the top surfaces and consider using species-specific hardwood edges for better durability. If you use commercial veneers, don't use a power sander – use a sanding block or card scraper. The last thing you want to do when you're doing your final sanding is to sand through the veneer and expose the substrate. Most importantly, always keep in mind that using veneer is not just a "cheap" alternative to using solid wood. It definitely has a time and place in any commercial or home workshop.

Show and Tell

Bob Brinkman - showed how he made a chess board with walnut and maple. Bob also showed a small oak box.



▲ **Vic Barr** - showed a set of keepsake boxes that are designed to be a wedding gift. They are shaped like two puzzle pieces that fit together.



▲ **Rich Sanders** - went wild and brought two projects. One was a small candle lantern with a palm tree cutout and the other was a colorful penguin intarsia.

Scott Wunder - announced that he burnt his shop down and now has new tools, specifically a "FriendMaker" 37" wide-belt sander.

Lie-Nielsen Event In Kansas City

Lie-Nielsen will be at the Kansas City Woodworkers Guild on the weekend of March 2nd and 3rd. For more information, visit <http://www.kcwoodworkersguild.org/Events/Events.htm>. Also, for anyone interested, on Saturday, February 18th, from 9:00 a.m. until noon, they are sponsoring a Woodworking Handtool Estate Liquidation sale for the family of a deceased member. Information for this even can be found on the home page of the www.kcwoodworkersguild.org website.

Updated Guild Website (www.stlwoodworkersguild.org)

Chris Law spoke for a few minutes about the new website which is now in service. There is a public section that anyone can access and a private section which has security clearance. In order to establish security clearance, you will have to have a Google e-mail login. The public side of the site will feature an event calendar, toy plans, member galleries and guild event galleries, and copies of the newsletters in .PDF format. The private, guild-only side will offer you access to the Member Forum and guild mailing lists. With this new security measure, where everyone has a separate login and password, your access to the site can be more closely monitored, as well. Your access to the Members-Only part can be revoked.

Advice & Tips

Do you have a woodworking question you haven't been able to find the answer to? Or do you have a tip or trick that has worked for you and you want to spread the knowledge? If so, then speak up at the next guild meeting when Wayne opens the floor for Advice and Tips!

Mini-Workshop

This next Sunday (February 18th, Wayne Watson will be hosting a mini workshop on hand plane restoration and use. Attending members will bring a #4 or #5 Stanley plane to the session and use and care instructions will be provided. The class goes from 10:00 a.m. to about 4:00 PM that day and will cost \$20. If you have any questions about this, or any other min workshop, please contact Kurt Herrmann via e-mail at: kurtdee@sbcglobal.net or by phone at 314-608-8602.

Faust Park

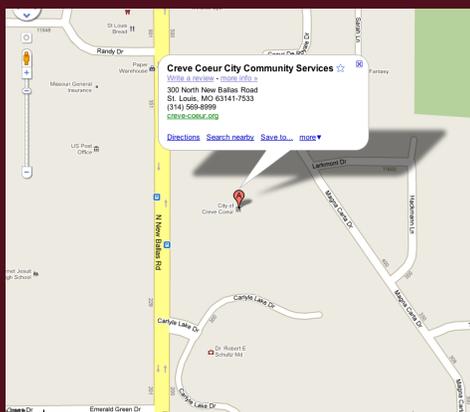
Equipping the shop is still under way. But we're closer to being done now that Steve Palmer has donated a Jet DC100 Dust Collector and an 8" scroll saw.

Dues Are Due!

It's that time of year again! If you haven't already paid your 2012 Guild Dues, then please do so as soon as possible. Maintaining your active guild status means you will continue to receive the monthly guild newsletter and will have access to the Member Only section of the new guild website. Bring your checkbook to the next meeting! (Your membership expired in November.)

Meeting location.

Creve Coeur Community Center, located at 300 North New Ballas Road, St. Louis, MO 63141.



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 \$30 for one years dues to: St. Louis Woodworkers Guild, c/o Treasurer Larry Grzovic, 2849 Championship Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63129.