

St. Louis Woodworkers Guild



August 2012
Issue 325

Our Next Meeting

Thursday 7:00 PM
July 19, 2012

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

Table Saw Maintenance by Dan Coleman

Due to some scheduling issues, Doug Edmundson's presentation was pushed back a few months. So for the August meeting (August 16th, 7:00 PM, Creve Coeur Community Center), we'll be treated to another Dan Coleman presentation! This one will be on table saw maintenance.

At Our Last Meeting: Hardwood Lumber Grading by Craig Norsen

At our last meeting, we were joined by Craig Norsen, President-Owner of U-Pick Hardwood Lumber. Due to his required attendance at a child's finals sporting event, we had to change the meeting up a little bit and let Craig speak with us first. He opened with a bit of information about his business.

U-Pick Hardwood Lumber is the retail side of Norstate Hardwoods, Inc (the wholesale side of the business). Craig uses over 600 wood lumber suppliers across the nation to source the best wood from the best locations. He gets his cherry from Pennsylvania and his maple from the northwest. Some of his wood comes from unusual sources, like figured maple from a cabinet maker in New York (who can't use figured wood in their cabinet framing).

He carries a big selection of highly-figured woods, including birds-eye maple, curly maple, curly cherry, and quarter-sawn white oak. He also has a good variety of exotic lumber, including Honduran mahogany, African mahogany, purple heart, yellow heart, zebrawood, and cocobolo. Check with him often, because every now and then he'll have some interesting wood, like reclaimed barn wood or thick walnut crotch slabs.

For the most part, the wood he offers is already sanded to 150 grit and dimensioned to 13/16" thick. He works very hard to keep his prices at least 10% lower than any retailers in the area.

If you've never seen his store, you might want to just swing by for a visit some Saturday morning. If you can make it by in August, you'll be able to also enjoy free burgers, brats, and beverages from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. for his Summer Saturdays event. There will be free giveaways, as well.

After a quick rundown of U-Pick Hardwood Lumber, Craig changed to the topic of hardwood lumber grading. He began with the reason for having a hardwood grading system in the first place. By the late 1800's, the hardwood industry was well-established in North America. But the only "system" in place was that only the highest-quality of lumber (which just meant "clear") was shipped any distance. Once the secondary wood processing industry (that is, manufacturing companies who used lower-quality lumber in their products for things like furniture framing, because it did not show and did not have to be of the highest quality) took off, the need for a formal grading system became obvious.

Rule used by lumber graders

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314.621.7711

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636.485.5217

Wayne's Sawdust August 2012

As you may have heard, Wayne was not available this month to write his Sawdust editorial as he was busy holding down an operating table and making sure the bypass machine was functioning properly. We all wish Wayne a speedy recovery.

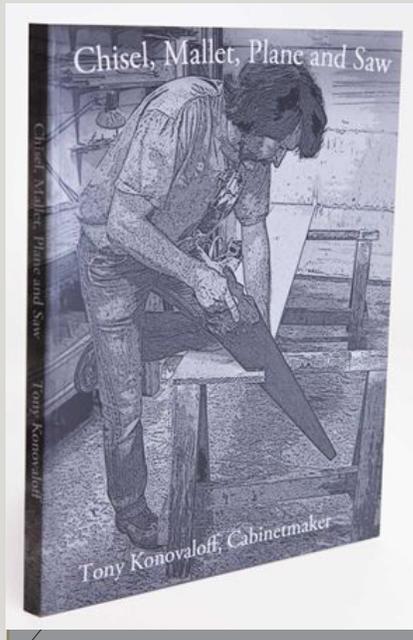
Wayne

New Web Address www.slwg.org

The guild website has a new address! It is www.slwg.org. The old web address will still work until 2014. Until the old URL expires, anyone trying to access the old address will be automatically redirected to the new URL. This new address will be much easier for our aging minds to remember and easier to give out to people who might be interested in joining the guild.

Book Review: Chisel, Mallet, Plane and Saw By Tony Konovaloff

By Ethan Sincox



I first heard about Tony Konovaloff through Chris Schwarz. He mentioned Tony and his new book, that Chris was carrying for sale at Lost Arts Press, in a blog entry. So I hopped over to Tony's website (www.tonykonovaloff.com) and thumbed through his site to see what he was about. I liked what I saw, so I took a chance and bought his book.

It arrived a few days later and I sat down with it over my next lunch break to give it the initial once-over. For starters, it is a paperback book, a good size (7" x 9"), and it has a high quality stitched binding. I didn't worry at all about breaking the spine when I used my iPad to hold it open while I ate lunch and read. The photography and art work, including the front cover, is all black and white. The quality of the photographs is... not bad. But this does not bother me, because I

know Tony wrote and published this book himself. He took most of the photographs, as well. I'm willing to forgo a little bit of quality for determination someone displays in publishing their own book.

The text reads fairly smoothly. There are a number of grammatical errors throughout the book, but none so bad as to make the content illegible or easily misunderstood. As a Technical Writer/Editor by trade, I'm trained to review any text with the editor's eye. So while many of these errors may pop out at me, it is likely true most people wouldn't even notice them. In the end, the content is clear and understandable, and that's really what counts.

The book opens and closes with the author's say so on certain topics. He speaks his mind, no holds barred. I love it when an author does this. He's not wasting his time writing about things for which I do not care and I'm not wasting my time reading those things. He tells us how he does it. He readily admits there are other ways, maybe even better ways for someone else, but these are the ways he likes to do it and these are the ways he does it. He speaks with 25+ years of real life furniture-making experience.

If you're looking for a book with step-by-step projects and tear-out plans for some of the furniture he discusses in the later chapters, then you'll have to look elsewhere. Tony doesn't include plans or cut lists because he doesn't use them in his own work. Besides, that's not the purpose of the book. It's a book on the philosophy of using hand tools, more than anything.

And if I wasn't already convinced, he makes some compelling arguments. I'm happy to have this book in my collection and will continue to reference it for ideas and understanding for many years.

Announcements

July Attendance

There were 49 people in attendance at the July 19th meeting.

Raffle Winners

Congratulations to the following winners of the monthly raffle drawing:

\$50 Woodcraft Gift Card
John Bronson

\$20 Rockler Gift Card
Allen Carlson

Toy Report

We delivered 150 toys in July. The total number of toys delivered for the year so far is 1053. Since 1994, the guild has donated 35,260 toy and craft items to the local hospitals.

We have surveyed the different hospitals to try and determine the items they are most in need of. Each hospital has different needs, but, in general, it looks like we need more of the following: rabbits, bears, heart necklaces, flowers, Halloween necklaces, Halloween cutouts, refrigerator magnet cutouts, cars, trinket boxes, and airplanes. One hospital has a use for alphabet cutouts from A to Z. The child life specialists have all agreed to keep in touch with us in order to avoid over-making items in the future. They will also call with special desires.

If you need patterns, see our web site to select and print a pattern. Or you can call and we will send you the patterns by mail. We would prefer it if you would complete at least 20-30 each of any craft pattern you select.

You can call John Patton at 314-843-0616 or Steve Briner at 636-866-6121 for any patterns or to arrange pickup or delivery.

Hardwood Lumber Grading

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The National Hardwood Lumber Association was formed in 1898 in order to meet this need of having a uniform set of grading rules. The NHLA is still highly active in the lumber industry. They offer short-courses on lumber grading that cover a variety of topics and have branched out into other aspects of the industry, as well, including promotion, advocacy, networking, and industry services. They also sell the really cool lumber scaling sticks Craig brought with him; this is a tool used to help a grader determine what grade the wood is. More information on the NHLA can be found here: <http://www.nhla.com>.

(By the way, Craig is an NHLA-certified lumber grader, in case anyone was wondering.)

The basic steps to grading lumber are as follows:

1. Determine the Surface Measure (SM) using a lumber scaling stick. Surface Measure is the measure of square feet on the face of the board.
2. Determine the poor side of the board. (You always grade the lumber on the bad side.)
3. Assign a trial grade to the poor face and estimate the yield of clear wood.
4. Determine the number of cuttings permitted in the trial grade.
5. Determine the amount of yieldable wood needed for that grade.
6. Calculate the total yieldable wood on the poor face.
7. Adjust the grade accordingly, if there is not a sufficient amount of clear-face yield from the board.
8. Tally SM by grade and thickness, using a basis of 4/4 (1" thick) lumber.

The Cutting Unit method is the most common way of grading lumber because it is so consistent. It uses a step-by-step process to create a percentage of the usable amount of wood compared to the total amount of wood in a board. This common ground makes conducting business between suppliers and manufacturers much easier. The system works well because it does not depend on a human forming an opinion of a particular board. It approximates the actual break-down of lumber as typically done on the manufacturing end by most furniture companies.

When you go to a lumber store to buy wood, you will be concerned with two things – the amount of board feet you need (or, how much board feet is in the board in front of you) and the grade of the wood you are looking at. Calculating board feet is easy, especially if you use a simpler unit of measure than feet. Instead, use inches (and round, for rough estimates). Technically, you'll be calculating BI, or Board Inches, at first. Multiply the width of the board in inches by the length of the board in feet. Then multiply that number by the thickness. Now divide this number by 12 to get your measurement back into board feet.

Determining what grade you are looking at is obviously more difficult. In fact, people have to go through certification courses to be able to properly do this. Instead, here are some indicators of what the most common grades are. This will help you determine if you are looking at the grade of lumber they say they are selling.

FAS – A FAS board must be at least 6” wide and 8’ long. The basic yield must be calculated on the poor side and should be equal to or greater than 83.33%

Selects – A Select board is graded based on both faces of the board. It must be at least 4” wide and 6’ long and should provide at least 83.33% yield.

No. 1 Common – This grade is based on the poor side of the board and has a minimum size of 3” wide and 4’ long. It should provide a basic yield of at least 66.66% good lumber.

No. 2A and No. 2B Common – These grades differ only in that clear face cuttings are specified with No. 2A and cuttings that are only “sound” are specified with No. 2B. In both cases, though, the minimum size is 3” wide by 4’ long, with a basic yield of at least 50%.

If you are interested in finding out more information about grading hardwood lumber, you can visit the NHLA website. Or, you could always stop by U-Pick Hardwood on a Saturday and chat with Craig while you’re picking up some lumber for your next project! Thanks for taking the time to visit with us, Craig! We look forward to chatting with you one-on-one over a stack of curly maple!

**Lumber stacks at
U-Pick Hardwoods**



Show and Tell

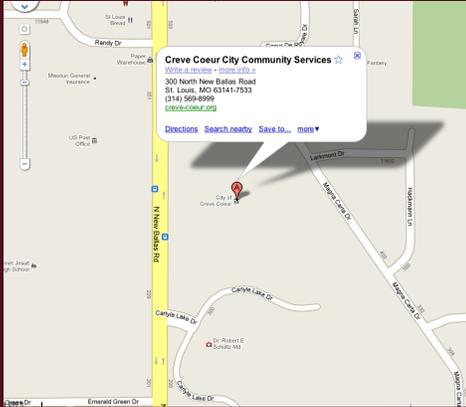
John Dahl brought in a picture frame and a chair that he’d pulled out of the trash. Both were fully restored and refinished and looked great! Nice finds, Jon!

Mini-Workshop

The Mini Workshop Committee is looking for IDEAS for new mini workshops. So, if you have an idea for a topic or subject for a mini workshop you would like to ATTEND, then contact Kurt Hermann by e-mail at kurtdee@sbcglobal.net or by phone at 314-608-8602. Of course, if you have a mini workshop you would like to host, Kurt would like to hear from you, as well.

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.