



June 2014
Issue 345

Our Next Meeting

Thursday 7:00 PM
June 19, 2014

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

Making Sundials

Guild President, Don Snyder, will give a presentation about wooden sundials. Come learn about making a sundial to celebrate a wedding anniversary, grandchild's birthday, or other memorable occasion. A look at wooden sundials, how to make them, and why you might want to do one yourself. Some fun with wood and *tempus fugit*.

At Our Last Meeting: The Making of a Violin by Geoffrey J. Seitz

At the May meeting, Geoffrey J. Seitz spent some time with the guild discussing the making of a violin. Geoffrey began as an apprentice in Spokane Washington in 1976, and his shop has now been open for more than 25 years. He began his presentation with some history and interesting facts about the violin. The current form of the violin dates from the early 1500s with the oldest existing example being made in 1530. At its most basic a violin is a mechanical string amplifier. The "technological" peak of the violin came in the 1700s with many pointing to Antonio Stradivari (1644-1737) as the greatest of the violin makers. However, as Geoffrey pointed out, some of Stradivari's fame is more myth than science. In a recent study, violin teachers, players, and makers were given samples of music played on a Stradivarius violin and music played on more recently made violins. A majority of those sampled choose the music being played on the new violins even though the Stradivarius model was appraised at over four million dollars. The last verified Stradivarius violin to be found was in 1963, so if someone claims to have found a previously undocumented Stradivarius it is most likely a fake.

Geoffrey said he is not trying to improve on the form. His goal is to make the best violin he can while holding to the traditions of the instrument. Strength and Flexibility – this is the target. Too flexible and the instrument will sound good but it will not hold up. Too strong and the violin will last for years but it will not sound good. The balance between these two is what makes a good instrument. He added that the size of a violin is standard and NOT customized to the person who is playing it. There is technically no difference between a fiddle and a violin. The difference is the style of music that is played on each.

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Geoffrey Seitz

Geoffrey showed all of the intricate details that go into making a violin.

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Fenton 636.717.1770

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314.209.1116

Hydraflow Equipment Co.
314.644.6677

Hibdon Hardwood Inc.
314.621.7711

U-Pick Hardwood Lumber
636.485.5217

President Letter June 2014

My saga of the red dot starts with an 'OMG!' moment I had on a recent Thursday morning. I awoke that morning with eyes so swollen they almost wouldn't open. I'll relate the story because it might save a member two from having a similar experience. Think of it as a safety lesson. I'm working on a little project that seemed to need some nicely figured woods. So, the day before the red dot event, I went to a couple of local wood stores and purchased five, 1/8" thick pieces of some exotic woods: chakte viga, katalox (a Mexican ebony), canarywood, African padauk and pau ferro (a Bolivian rose). I used a handsaw to cut all of them to the approximate sizes I needed for the project, turned out the shop lights, and called it a day. The next morning, with grotesquely swollen eyes, I headed to an eye doctor seeking advice on what to do.

"A potential infection," said he, putting me on antibiotics. The next day, Friday, the eye problem was still present but now, in addition, I had broken out in chickenpox-like red bumps on my arms, neck, chest – pretty much all over. It didn't hurt or itch much, but it sure looked hideous. Off to a dermatologist I went. His diagnosis: contact dermatitis, which is a catch-all term for all sorts of



skin reactions to allergens. Next, I was off the antibiotics and onto the steroid drug prednisone. That proved to be somewhat of a miracle drug, with the problems clearing up rapidly. I am sure you are anticipating what happened – I had an allergic reaction to one or more of those exotic woods. Which one, or ones, was unclear.

I decided to do a little experiment on myself. I cut a tiny chip off of each of the woods and used spots of tape to place them on my arm (see the picture). After about 24 hours, I removed the tape and saw nothing, no reaction at all. But, two days later that red dot appeared at the location of wood #5, see the picture. This way, I identified the single culprit as the pau ferro. So, what's the lesson? Practicing safe woodworking comes in many forms. An important one that is not usually considered is to think about the toxicity of the wood we use. I found out the hard way, but I am not the only Guild member who has

had an experience like this. Kurt Herrmann had a similar bout with African blackwood. Ken Bressler's experience with cocobolo is legendary, and there are others.

I won't be using pau ferro again without taking the precaution of wearing a dust mask, nitrile gloves, and a long sleeved shirt with a buttoned up collar; an even more likely action is to pass on using pau ferro altogether since there are so many other choices of figured woods. It's hard to anticipate having an allergic reaction because different woods affect different people in different ways. A Google search on "wood toxicity" yields many websites with information. Among them, I found for pau ferro that "severe reactions are uncommon, pau ferro has been reported as a sensitizer. Usually most common reactions simply include eye and skin irritation. Anecdotal evidence suggests that there is a high rate of reaction among woodworkers, and the wood contains the very same sensitizing substances as those found in rosewoods." A check on the toxicity of the five woods I used might have prevented my nasty experience resulting in the red dot. One last thought. Since prednisone is a steroid and steroids are banned substances, I guess I won't be able to compete in future Olympics games. Darn! Darn! Darn!

Don

Follow the Guild on Facebook. Stay up to date with Guild announcements, events, and photos.

Show and Tell



◀ **Walter Henderson** – Walter showed a serving tray made with multiple strips of wood.

Thank you from Children's Hospital

May 22, 2014

Dear members of the Woodworkers Guild,
Nearly every month a bag of wooden toys, butterflies, cats, flowers, boxes, cars, etc., that you so carefully make for our patients, shows up in our Child Life playroom and teen lounge.

I have been the manager of the Child Life department for 11 years and the items that you have sent consistently have made the patients' visits much brighter. The kid/teenagers LOVE to paint these items.

Thank you for making these items, month after month, year after year and sending them to the patients. The Child Life staff greatly appreciates the time that you put into making all these items and for joining our staff in making each child's hospital stay a little better.

Warm Regards,

Jill Malan

Manager, Child Life Services
St. Louis Children's Hospital

Announcements

There were 69 attendees, including guests and members, at the May 15th guild meeting

The winner of the 50-50 raffle drawing was David Knudson. Congrats David!

Hands on Class

Project: Build a Shaker-Style Side Table

Taught by: Guild Member Bob Brinkman

Where: Guild's Workshop in Faust Park

When: TBD (6 weekend days in July and August)

Tuition: \$150

Future Workshops

June 21, 8:30 a.m. - Noon
Learn finishing. Dyes vs Stains. Taught by guild member Scott Wunder at WunderWoods.

July/Aug. Build a shaker table. Taught by guild member Bob Brinkman.

Oct./Nov. Make an infill plane. Taught by guild members Mike Sistek and Robbie Field.

Upcoming Meeting

Thursday, July 17

Dale Preston

Stained Glass for Furniture

Toy Report

We delivered a total of 150 toys to 3 hospitals in May 2014. Our year to date total is 768 items. Since 1994 the total delivered is 38,634.

A big thank you to the group that made the toys delivered to Steve Briner at the May meeting.

For the next delivery in June/July we need items such as; cars, airplanes, animal kits (coyotes, cats, bears), and flower kits. Patriotic items like flags are good for Flag Day and July 4th. Heart necklaces are always good for Father's and Grandparent's Days. We have a good supply of Butterflies but need the items noted.

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 need about 20 to 30 each of any craft pattern you select.

You may call John at 314-843-0616 or Steve at 636-866-6121 for any of the above or to arrange pickup or delivery.

At Our Last Meeting: The Making of a Violin

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His building process is much the same as it would have been 1, 2, or 3 centuries ago as he has very few power tools in his shop. The two most notable exceptions are a bandsaw and a drill press. Otherwise, he uses gouges, finger planes, scrapers, and occasionally sandpaper to achieve the desired thickness on all of the wooden parts. He starts by carving the back of the instrument out of Maple. He then glues the ribs to the corner blocks. These ribs are thin and small. Geoffrey only uses hot hide glue and he gave two reasons for this choice. First, hide glue can be reversed so the instrument can be taken apart and fixed if necessary. Second, hide glue is very similar to the wood at a molecular level. This means that sound will travel through the glue and the wood at the same rate. Next, he showed the making and dying of the Purfling, which is a narrow decorative edge which acts a fence around the vibrating surfaces. It also adds strength and sets off the shape of the violin since it is a different color than the top and/or back. This Purfling is a triple laminate with holly sandwiched between two 3mm layers of cherry. Next, the top is carved out of Red Spruce. The top is thicker in the middle and thinner at the edges. This allows sound to travel across the entire instrument. There is a sound bar internally that acts as a top to bottom brace. This bar regulates vibration. It is friction fit inside the instrument. Closer to the bridge it tightens the top, move it back to loosen. This allows for fine tuning of the instrument. Once the top and bottom have been joined one has the completed corpus of the instrument. Geoffrey then moved to the scroll which is also made from maple. He explained that the shape, similar to a nautilus shell, adds strength to the end of the instrument. Scrolls can be the makers mark as these may differ from maker to maker. He uses a bridge made of maple and it is normally unfinished. The finger board is traditionally rosewood or ebony. With all the part complete the neck assembly is glued to the body and the violin is ready for a varnish finish.



The varnish that he uses will only dry in direct sunlight. In the sun it will skin over in 15 minutes so dust is not an issue. Geoffrey mixes his own as he has been unable to find a commercial product that is durable enough to be handled while being flexible enough to not affect the sound. Typically he will apply a ground coat, followed by a sealer coat, and complete the process with the color coat. Varnish can be touched up if required over time although wear is generally left as a show of the instruments use and age. He typically seals the inside of the violin but many makers do not. He also places his label and brands the inside of each of his instruments. The instrument that he brought to the presentation cost \$9500. More famous current makers can charge from 20-40 thousand dollars. On average he can produce a finished violin in 400 hours. More efficient makers can make one in approximately 200 hours. Geoffrey also sells used violin in his shop ranging from \$350 up to \$250K.

Geoffrey completed the presentation by playing a short tune on his violin.

More information on Geoffrey's violins can be found at www.seitzviolins.com or you can stop by his shop at 4171 Loughborough Avenue, Saint Louis, MO 63116.

Policy Changes For Mini-Workshops

The Guild's Executive Board has approved changes to the sign up process for future Mini-Workshops. We have found that too many Members have been signing up for workshops and then not attending since they don't have any "skin in the game." Space is almost always limited for Mini-Workshops and on numerous occasions, we have members wishing to attend classes, but were unable to do to those who have signed up ahead of them. Then we have found that no shows have excluded those who wished to attend when spots went vacant. Therefore the following policies will be adhered to.

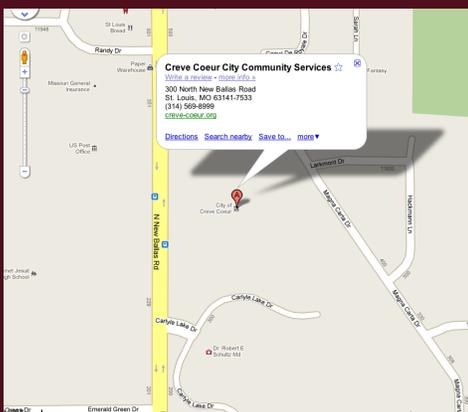
New Tuition Policy

1. Single-session classes - Full tuition to be paid at time of signup.
2. Multi-session classes - Deposit equal to single-session tuition to be paid at the time of signup with the balance due before the class commences.
3. 50% refund will be made for cancellations made prior to the last scheduled Guild meeting before the class. This refund will grow to a full 100% refund if all available class slots are subsequently filled with no loss of revenue to the Guild.
4. No refund will be made for a cancellation (or "no-show") after the last scheduled Guild meeting.
5. In the event that an emergency causes a Guild Member to miss a class, a full refund will be made provided the instructor or workshop organizer is notified by phone or e-mail before the class commences.
6. A Member may transfer his slot to another Member without penalty as long as it does not become a "no-show."

We believe these changes to the Tuition Policy will greatly reduce members signing up for classes then not attending, thus denying another member an opportunity to attend.

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, P. O. Box 411766, St. Louis, MO 63141-9998*