



NEWSLETTER

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JULY

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I'm only president for a short time so this will be a short message. Be thankful.

All that were at the Randy Cochran seminar enjoyed a fun learning experience. Randy in his laid-back, humorous manner, entertained and educated us. Chairmaking should be a less intimidating experience for those of us who witnessed and absorbed Randy's words and actions.

The Jack Harich seminar and workshop seems to be gathering interest. If you are interested, let us know, soon. October is not far away.

I am pursuing some interesting craftsmen for the meetings coming up. It is a wonderful learning and motivational experience to hear about and see the work of accomplished wood craftsmen. I think you will be pleased.

Several members have mentioned to me how much they enjoyed our members participating in the monthly programs. There is a wealth of knowledge in our group. It would be shameful for it to be left untapped. If you have something to share (and you have): a jig, a hint, a special piece of work, a piece of wood, a special tool or a technique, please let me know. Our membership can and should be a great vehicle for exchange of information. If you have an idea for a program or criticism of past programs, please let me know.

Hopefully, I'll see you in July.
(It wasn't as short as I thought.)

Jim Caldwell
Vice President

NEXT MEETING

JULY 11, 1991 • 7:00 P.M.

Dale Lewis, our Vice-President and program chairman, has made arrangements to have presented a program on making porch rockers. Now don't get discouraged by thinking "what?, more chairs?" because there is a vast difference between the type and style and material used in making indoor furniture and porch rockers. Mr. Lane Latham, from Bibb County, makes his rockers from Oak, Ash and Hickory, and we look forward to hearing what precautions Mr. Latham takes to compensate for expansion and contraction of chair joints when exposed to outdoor weather.

LAST MEETING • JUNE, 1991

Our program was brought to us by members of the Guild, and there seems to be an endless number of talented woodworkers in the Guild. Three members, starting with Hugh Davies, demonstrated sharpening techniques. Hugh, who has recently returned from a hands-on working seminar in Georgia on "timbering" was a natural to talk about sharpening chisels. He is an advocate of, and devotee to, Japanese water stones. When sharpening, he uses three grits, starting with coarse (220), medium (1,000), and fine (6,000). Not wanting to risk changing the bevel on his chisels he uses a roller jig which precludes changing

the bevel. Hugh does not even own a grinding wheel, doing all his sharpening on the water stones. Thank you Hugh. Then came Sterling Brewer. Most of us, and as of now all of us, know Sterling is a carver. He is especially adept at relief carvings, and is the one that carved our Logo which was placed on a tripod and displayed at our 1990 show. He is also a "stone" man, in that he uses oil stones, only, just as Hugh uses water stones only. Sterling, being the affable fellow he is, entertained us with his descriptions of what he was doing. He wants it known he uses a circular motion in addition to a forward and backwards motion when sharpening carving tools. He must be doing something right because his work doesn't need any sanding when he finishes. He suggests when honing a gouge you may want to hold the chisel in a sideways manner and rotate the edge along the stone. Our third expert was the master, himself, Dale Lewis. Dale didn't talk about any other than turning tools. Now where our other two experts do not use a grinding wheel at all, Dale uses practically nothing else. You should see the ground off deep-fluted bowl gouges and parting tools he showed us. They only last a few years using this method but it is difficult to hone a gouge as the only means of sharpening. We went to a seminar at Highland Hardware last year to see and hear Liam O'Neil, the Irish bowl turner. He does not hone his chisels at all, just grinds them and goes back to work. O'Neil says he only gets a year or two from a chisel because he can't afford to lose time from production at the honing stone. Dale pointed out that

especially when turning very hard wood it is necessary to sharpen often, and thus, just grinding is all he does. We appreciate Dale putting this program together, and it appeared the members were duly impressed.

SUMMER SEMINAR

It is something of a mystery to us why more of us weren't in attendance at the Randy Cochrane show. Randy just did a splendid job of showing and explaining to us the making of chairs. He started off by talking about design (form). He said the way to approach the designing of a chair is to follow the adage "Form Follows Function." In other words, first determine how the chair is going to be used, then design it around its function. He said it is almost necessary to "learn to think like a chair." Easier said than done. Included in this consideration is whether it will be used by a Joe or a Josephine (there is a difference, you know, and thank goodness for the difference). After these decisions the material to be used may be considered. Generally, chairs fall into some basic dimensions, and regardless of what kind of chair it is it will probably approximate the following basic dimensions:

- SEAT - 16" TO 18" from floor, 16" to 17" deep, and sloping from front to rear some 5° to 10°.
- BACK - The back of the chair should slope some 105° to 110°. If there is a support for the back of the user, this being the lumbar support, it should be 7" to 9" above the seat (such as a bar stool back).

Randy had done some preliminary work in preparing some of his chair parts. The seat had been glued up from some six

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2" x 2" pieces, and working with walnut, he had glued the seat in such a way as to make carving of the contours on the seat to accommodate the user's legs and bottom. By clamping the back end together on a level plane, and dropping two pieces on either side of center and clamping in that form, "cavities" were formed which almost became the contour for the seat bottom. An interesting innovation is the jig he uses to build the chair on and around. By so doing he eliminates most chances for error. Most of his work is original and is custom made for his client, so a jig is a valuable tool. His mortise and tenons are pretty much standard, except in the case of a stool-type chair he likes to have the leg go all the way through the seat and cut off even with the surface of the chair. Then he likes to put wedges of a different color wood in the leg that shows as part of the seat surface. He also prefers to buy a piece of wood from which the entire chair can be made thus eliminating different grains and colors of wood. A thoroughly fascinating experience, and we appreciate our Guild officers providing this kind of professional expertise, so that we may learn from the experts. We also appreciate Randy Cochrane coming down from Decatur to spend those hours with us.

PRESIDENTIAL ABSENCE

Since President Caldwell was on vacation in the Southern part of France, where _____, we were treated to the likes of "Slim" Brooks, our immediate past president. Nelson reported that our 1991 Show was a huge success. There were some 70 items entered, and the Sloss Gallery proved to be a thoroughly nice place to have the show. The Gallery recorded some 750 people came through, and there were probably many more who failed to sign the register. Still commenting on the Show, it was Nelson's privilege to announce the winner of the PEOPLE'S CHOICE entry at the show. Just in case some of our newer members aren't acquainted with this feature of the show, the spectators are asked to vote on the piece they think is the best in the show. For about the umpteenth, Ed Ramsey was the winner with his fabulous rocking horse. Congratulations, Ed, you are a much deserved winner.

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