

DIMENSIONS

Newsletter of the Pacific Woodworkers Guild

At a Glance:

- Next meeting is Tuesday March 19th.
- Only 2 more months to get your 2x4 challenge entry completed. Judging is at April meeting (April 16, 2002)

When Last We Met

By Dan Lemire

Our chairman, **Bill Ophoff**, welcomed **Gerry Keirnan, Leo Jean, Ron Kidds, Brian Pyke, Bryce Mack, Gerry Buckston** and ? **Dristoll** (sorry, did not get first name).

General Meeting

Speaker for the next meeting is from Lyndon, Washington and will talk about making toys

Pre meeting demo will be done by **Bill Ophoff** and it will be on cabinet scrapers, their uses and how to sharpen them. Bill has thrown out a challenge to other members to think about doing pre-meeting demos on aspects of projects that they are presently working on. Giving the guild members an opportunity to provide feed back and also to learn from your experience gained in doing the project.

The membership list was circulated by **Lou Hafer** to all members in attendance, if you were not at the meeting check with Lou at the next meeting for a copy of the membership list.

The Raffle made \$165.00 and the Green ticket was definitely the way to go. **Jan**, made every effort to even up the score, but the Green tickets still were drawn 3 to 1 over the red tickets.

Elections did not see any changes in the executive, but a number of other Guild members stepped forward to add their names to commit-

tees and agreed to help out with specific duties. Thank you to all for volunteering your time, it is appreciated by both the executive and the other guild members.

Bill Fox made a motion that the present executive stand for another year and this was seconded with no opposition from the floor, surprisingly the Motion was carried.

Bob Bedier created a bit of excitement when he announced that **Jim Harold** from WOOD Magazine was coming to Victoria and Vancouver to look for articles to put into the magazine. It is apparent that Jim will be in attendance at the April 2X4 challenge. So like having a scout for hockey talent show up at a game, all you woodworkers aspiring to make the NHL of woodworking, get your talent out on display for the 2X4 Challenge. Who knows?, thoughts 6 figure numbers could be coming to a your home or a home near by. Jim is looking for smaller projects, unique design, well crafted and the word is if he goes for a professional photographer, then something serious is going to happen.

The future of the Delta workshop at the Cloverdale show is in jeopardy. Peter the coordinator that Delta has employed for the past few years is no longer employed by Delta and that kind of leaves things up in the air for next year. Stay tuned as our man in the know, **Denis Reid**, will keep us up to date on this development.

Bench Building Brigade Sawdust Huddle

By Bill Ophoff

The gang got together at **Bill Fox's** shop Saturday 23 February to move along the completion of our second wood workers bench for raffling off at the October Woodworking Show. **Lou Hafer, Lor Pellett, Denis Reid**, and I launched back in on the finer details of the all wood vises. **Merv Graham** came along to lend a much appreciated hand. **Gregg Parsons** was there to take notes on the construction and to refine the detailing of the plans he is preparing. Gregg showed us the parts he has completed drafting so far and they look great. In addition to showing the parts in three dimensions, Gregg is also drafting some very good alternate construction methods. We should need only one more short session to wrap up the assembly of our bench and perhaps one other to sand and finish it. It should be a thing of beauty in time for its debut at the Richmond Carver's show in May.



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Please direct newsletter submissions to the newsletter editor, Murray Mackinnon, via email: murraym@istar.ca

The Pacific Woodworkers Guild is a non-profit association of British Columbia Craftspeople dedicated to excellence in woodworking. Guild members meet on the third Tuesday of each month (except July and August) in Richmond, B.C.

The newsletter is published monthly, ten times per year, and distributed free to members and associate members. Membership is available to anyone interested in any form of fine woodworking. Membership fees are \$25 for twelve months; Associate membership fees (newsletter only) are \$15 for ten issues.

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Guild Executive

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Vice-President
Treasurer
Secretary
Members-at-Large

Bill Ophoff
 Dan Lemire
 Lou Hafer
 Paulin Laberge
 Paul Townsend
 Bill Fox
 Art Liestman
 Bob Bedier

Committees

Newsletter -

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Editor
Labels
Mailout
Reporters

Paul Townsend
 Murray Mackinnon
 Murray Mackinnon
 Fred Otte
 Denis Reid
 Gordon Bednard
 Merv Graham
 Steve Hansen
 Derek Yee

Webmaster

Entertainment/Workshops

2x4 Challenge Assistants

Richmond Carvers' Show

BC Woodworking Show -

Delta Workshop
Assistant
PWG Booth
Assistant

Denis Reid
 Art Eberwein
 Bill Fox
 Harry Taylor

Christmas Toy Workshop

Fundraising/Charity Raffle Assistant

Library

Denis Reid
 Jan Dicks
 Klaas Focker
 Bob Bedier

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Pacific Woodworkers Guild will be held on Tuesday March 19th, starting at 7:30 pm (pre-meeting demo at 6:30 pm).

For sale



- > 16" heavy duty Rexon (Busy Bee) bandsaw cost \$500 – yours with 8 blades for just \$199. Phone (604) 986-5746 to arrange viewing.
- > The students woodworking bench that has served as the prototype for the Bench Building Brigade's two raffle benches is available for sale. I have had several folks say to let them know when it was available but I have forgotten who they were. I am asking \$150 for the cutie. I am sorry to let it go after enjoying these past twenty-five years but space constraints prevail. Please call me at (604) 583-5463 – **Bill Ophoff**

Thomas Chippendale

A conversation with Peter Scaife

CHIPPENDALE—a word used by antique dealers to describe mahogany furniture made in the third quarter of the eighteenth century.

If you are trying to furnish your home with Chippendale furniture, be wary; deal with a reputable firm. For instance, few designs can be clearly traced to any particular pattern-book of his and if all the furniture said to be from his workshop were laid end-to-end !

In the nineteenth century there were many deliberate copies made in this style. It is a tribute to his skill that he managed to produce so much graceful furniture for a society, which was demanding novelty so strongly. Few cabinet makers at that time stamped their work - more often a paper label would be gummed in but the authenticity can sometimes be proved by invoices where the pieces in question have been in the same family for generations - and there seem to be more documents relating to Chippendale than to most other makers.

If a dealer tells you it's 'country Chippendale' all he means is that it is roughly in the right style but that it was made by someone unknown outside London.

The Trade Description Act should help to limit the kind of misrepresentation I have encountered: in an antique dealer's I was looking at a small, over-priced, and poorly restored table. It could have been made by virtually anyone from 1750 to 1800. After I had commented on the price, there was some further conversation and then he murmured the magic words, "It is Chippendale, of course, Sir".

I didn't disillusion him-but I didn't buy it either.

On what, then does Thomas Chippendale's claim to fame rest? Research shows that his true position is that of a great furniture maker among others - but the others were virtually unknown.

He was a Yorkshire carpenter's son and called himself an "upholder (upholsterer, that is) and cabinet-maker". By the time he was 35 he had come down to London and had a successful business in St. Martin's Lane, employing at least 22 men. His apprenticeship would have ensured that he had a thorough training in all branches of woodworking but with a business of that size it seems unlikely that he made any piece from start to finish with his own hands,

although he would have been capable of doing so.

Certainly he was famous in his own day; in another designer's pattern-book, delightfully entitled "The Cabinet and Chair-Maker's Real Friend and Companion", Chippendale is referred to as a "very ingenious author" and there is little doubt his writing added to his fame. Publicity-wise he got in first and backed up this advantage by using great tact with his clients.

But reputation is not built on publicity and charm alone. His furniture is among the best produced during the mid-eighteenth century and he was an interpreter rather than a creator of fashion.

English designers and makers were adapting high fashion for the middle classes. Even though permanent workshops had been established only since the 1690's, this was the high point in English furniture making and Chippendale's furniture remains distinctively English despite some French and Chinese influence. He could rely on skilled workmen to execute his designs; their tools, often kept in beautifully made chests, they would buy themselves and the range of hand-tools available was roughly comparable to that available today.

Mahogany, of course, was the wood in vogue but speaking of some chairs Chippendale does state "They may be made of mahogany or any other wood and painted". Certainly they were sometimes made of oak or beech and stained to resemble mahogany.

The names of competitors are scarcely known today; but there were many of them and they were good. There were William Ince and John Mayhew, who exported furniture and whose pattern-book owed something to Chippendale's ; William Vile and John Cobb, who worked for royalty; George Seddon, who employed 400 men; Waring and Gillow, who at the time had not yet joined forces; and if you're ever feeling neglected, just think of Chippendale's partner, Thomas Haig. He occupies a place in history like Whistler's father.

Chippendale worked the switch-selling technique in the middle of the eighteenth century - but with a difference. Today the general idea is to arouse the prospective buyer's interest with cheap goods and then to persuade him to buy

(Continued on page 6)

This is the first in a series of three articles by Paul Harell originally published in the Spring 1996 issue of Home Furniture, which is now out of print.

Getting with the Grain—Part One

By Paul Harell et al

If someone remarks on the grain in a piece of furniture, they are usually responding to something exotic: wood with wild quilted figure or vibrant bands of color, perhaps a piece of quartersawn oak with a sunrise of medullary rays streaming across it. Most furniture does without such arresting patterns, but the visual power of the grain is still at work. Even in furniture made with the plainest wood, the grain pattern can have a profound impact on the success of the design.

On the drawing board, a design is all outlines. When you build the piece in wood, in effect you draw a lot more lines on it. Selecting and orienting the wood to control those new lines is a key part of the design process. Often, the difference between enhancing and undermining a design is just a matter of rotating a leg blank 90° before you saw it, or spending a minute or two laying out a group of stretchers before cutting them out. Selecting and sawing wood with care is like good joinery: Neither will rescue a bad design, but they are both necessary to turn a good idea into fine furniture. If you succeed it will have what the English furniture maker **Edward Barnsley** called *repose*.

On the following pages, I've presented a few techniques for predicting and controlling grain. I don't think there is always one right way to have the grain flow across a piece of furniture. The point is not to let it be an accident.

Pre-meeting Demo

By Bill Ophoff

I spoke at the last meeting of how the pre-meeting demos do not need to be done by experts. To prove my point I will prepare a demo on a topic I have little practical experience. It will be my objective to learn how to sharpen and use a cabinet scraper. This a challenge to myself and to others I hope to convince or will volunteer to give these pre-meeting demos. At the March meeting I'll ask for presenters for May and June which will provide ample preparation time for those good souls.

Artistry at its Best

Art Liestman was recently invited to be an Artist in Residence at the online woodturning gallery called "Kestrel Creek Gallery". Check out <http://www.kestrelcreek.com/>.

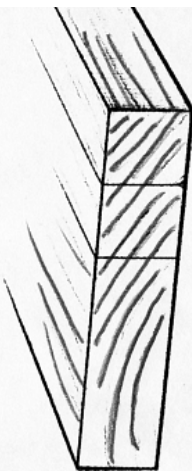
Arranging the Grain for Wooden Legs

Because legs are seen from all sides, it is important that the grain on adjacent faces be compatible. For a straight or tapered leg, you can get the same grain pattern on all four faces by cutting the leg blank so that the grain (as viewed on the end) runs diagonally from one corner to the other. Cutting the leg with the end grain parallel instead of diagonal results in two faces with straight grain and two with curving grain. (Figure 1, page 5)

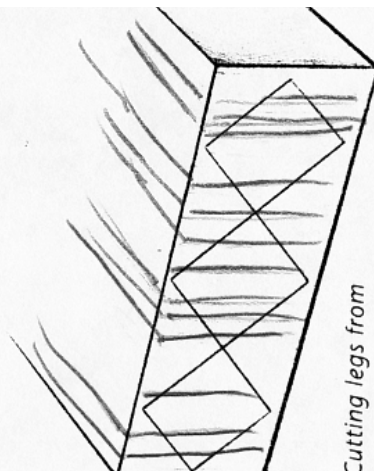
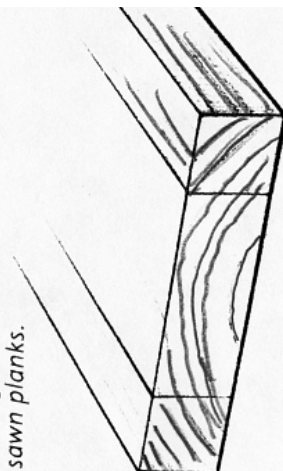
If the legs will be curved, the diagonal pattern of the end grain should run toward the outside corners of the legs. This allows the grain lines to follow the shape of the legs instead of running counter to it. If the legs are oriented incorrectly, the grain lines will be cut as the curve is sawn. The grain will appear to fight the curve of the leg, and in addition, the grain will be shorter, and the legs weaker. (Figure 2, page 5)

When I want to cut blanks for legs, I try to find planks that have diagonal grain at one or both edges. It's possible to get legs with the right grain from a thick quartersawn plank, but you have to make a lot of sawdust to do it, and you lose a board better suited as a tabletop, cabinet case or veneer. (Figure 3, page 6)

FINDING LEGS IN LUMBER



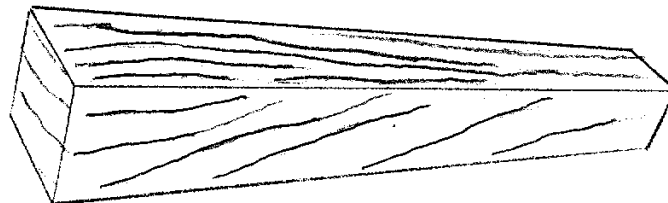
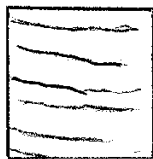
You can often find leg stock at the edges of flat-sawn planks.



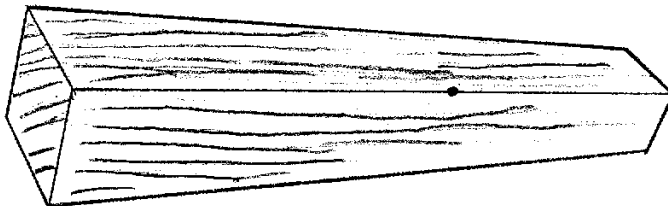
Cutting legs from quartersawn planks wastes wood.

Figure 1

ORIENTING THE GRAIN FOR LEG BLANKS

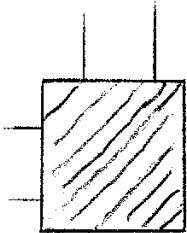


Parallel end grain results in a leg with two straight-grained faces and two wavy-grained faces.

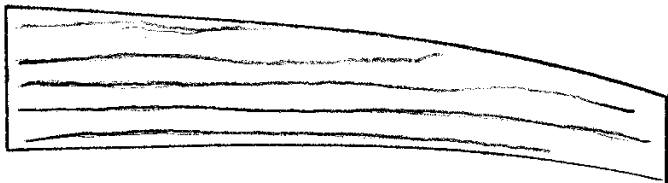
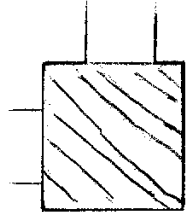


Diagonal end grain results in a leg with straight grain on all four faces.

ORIENTING THE GRAIN TO FOLLOW A CURVED LEG

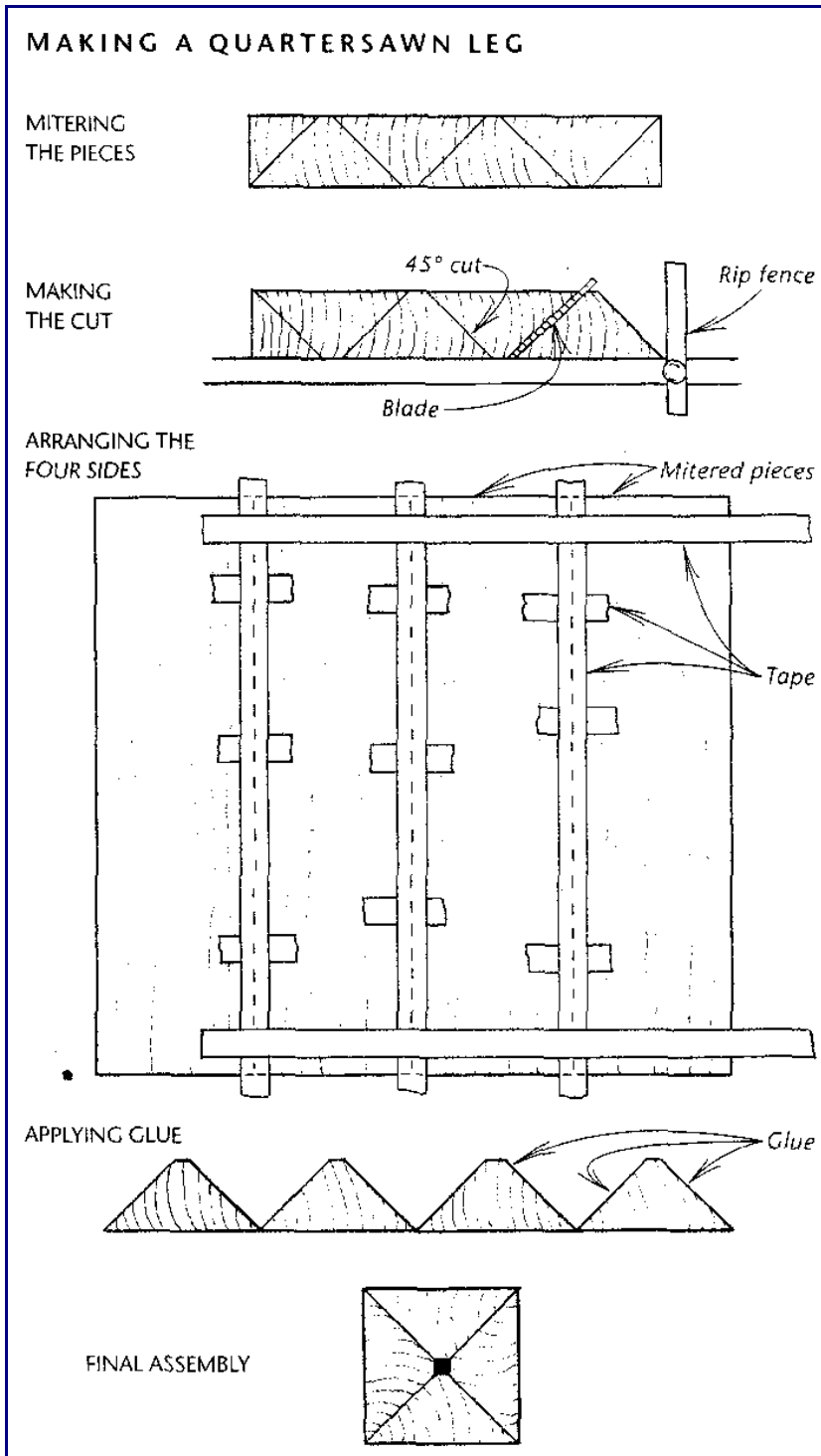


With end grain diagonal but running side to side, the face grain fights the curve of the leg.



With diagonal end grain running outward, the face grain will follow the curve of the leg.

Figure 2



(Continued from page 3)

more expensive ones.

Two hundred years ago the gambit worked in reverse. In 1754, when Chippendale was 36, he published the first edition of his book "The Gentleman and Cabinet Maker's Director". This was a 'pattern-book', a trade catalogue if you like, and contained 160 engraved plates of all kinds of furniture; implicit in this is the assumption that they were offered for sale.

Although the majority of people who bought the book were in the furniture trade, Chippendale hoped to attract to his workshop patrons of wealth and position who would make a selection. But he was soon under fire. "These designs are impossible to make", was the cry and there is a lot of truth in that criticism.

If you know anything of furniture construction, and certainly he did, you will realise that to make up some of his designs would not only be extremely difficult and costly, but also that the result would not have been functionally sound. Chippendale put these comments down to "malice, ignorance and inability" in a later edition of the Director but the fact remains that surviving furniture definitely attributable to his workshops is usually much plainer than in the plates.

Conclusion ?

Bring people into your saleroom thinking they are going to buy highly decorative, very impressive goods and then persuade them to have something plainer, more strongly made, and, in our eyes, in far better taste.

The fame of his name is deceptive today: Chippendale and furniture go together like mortice and tenon, but I dare say that while prospective clients were mulling over which design to choose there was more than one chair maker in the West End who was saying: "Our firm makes chairs better than that Yorkshireman can".

And who knows-he may have been right!

Figure 3