

DIMENSIONS

Newsletter of the Pacific Woodworkers Guild

At a Glance:

- Next meeting is
Tuesday October 15th.

When Last We Met

By Derek Yee

Bill Ophoff started the first meeting of the new season by giving everyone a warm welcome and mentioning that he was looking forward to a fun and exciting series of meetings. Four new guests with varied interests introduced themselves: **Brandon Bloomfield, Jerry Quen, Robbie Katz,** and **Jennifer Fletcher** – Welcome!.

Guest Speaker

Our speaker for the evening was **Vijay Narayan** from Mohawk Western Supplies, which is located on 942 SW Marine Drive in Vancouver.

Vijay is a walking encyclopedia of information about finishing. He started the session by talking about how the characteristics of different species of wood – open grain vs. closed grain – can impact on finishing. He also mentioned that the preparation of the wood surface can also be critical and suggested that if you plan to stain you should sand up to 220/320 grit depending on the type of wood you are using. One theme that was discussed throughout the evening was the difference between water-based and solvent-based products – it seems like the only downside to water-based products is that they may require more time to dry (but that might be an advantage in certain cases).

Vijay then described a number of different treatments (tricks) to solve different kinds of problems – such as using bleaches, sealers, and using tints to modify the color of fillers or oil based stains. The pros and cons of using shellac were discussed, and then there was an introduction to the lost technique of French polishing that creates that rich, high gloss, oh so smooth finish. The session was finished up by talking about safety. When you are using a petroleum-based product and you are also using a rag – make sure that you don't leave the oil soaked rag "tightly bundled up" or you could start a fire.

Business Meeting

A request was made that if anyone has a hand-saw with a "comfortable" handle, could you please bring it to the next meeting so a tracing can be made of it.

PWG's Toy Workshop needs your help [for more information see page 2]– In particular, think of toys for girls.

The issues related to reorganizing the affairs of the club were discussed and it was suggested that PWG should formally thank the owners of a business named Pacific Woodworking for their support that will enable us to retain and continue to use the name Pacific Woodworkers Guild. PWG will present a gift (craftsmanship of **Bill Fox**) to the owners of Pacific Woodworking.

PWG offered their sympathies to **Fred Otte** on the passing of his wife.

It was mentioned that if the club is able to find a champion, it might be possible to continue on with the tradition of the Delta Toy Workshop because Delta would be willing to continue to provide the tools.

Paulin Laberge noted that the next 2x4 challenge is scheduled for April 15 and he was looking for consensus on a theme. Based on a straw poll – at the current moment the theme looks like it might be "no-theme".

During the show and tell, **Phil Laliberte** displayed a guitar neck model that was fabricated on a machine that was controlled by a computer. Pretty high tech stuff.

**President's Challenge for October:
Things Used in the Kitchen**



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Please direct newsletter submissions to the newsletter editor, Steve Hansen, via email: urquell@shaw.ca or call 986-5471.

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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Annual Christmas Toy Workshops

The first Christmas Toy Workshop for the year was held on Saturday, September 21st with seven members attending. Plans for some toys were distributed and 'prototypes' were started. Thanks to **Brandon, Gavin, Matt, Steve, Gerry and Rob** for their assistance. Gerry brought 20 completed cars, trucks and tractors so we have a good start on our toy collection. Special thanks to **Henry Schultz** for the making and donating wooden wheels in various sizes. Members may bring finished or started toys to the meetings or to the next Toy Workshop which is on Saturday, November 23 at **Bill Fox's** Shop, from 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Pacific Woodworkers Guild will be held on Tuesday October 15th, starting at 7:30 pm. Pre-meeting demo at 6:30 pm.

The guest speaker, **Annie Prefontaine**, is a stringed instrument maker who five years ago apprenticed with a Granville Island luthier. She has made both violins and guitars. Her presentation will provide a general overview of what is involved in building an instrument, and she will also show a few of the tools that are used in the trade.

James Krenov, doyen of the American school of woodworking, officially retired from teaching this year. He leaves an incredible legacy and to honour him we reproduce selected items from his book "A Cabinetmaker's Notebook".

James Krenov—Selected Articles (Part Three of Five)

Of all the tools we cabinetmakers have around us, the ones that are most neglected are knives. I don't know why this is so: perhaps because knives generally are rather crude and the work we associate with them is whittling. You know: the boy sitting on a stump, chewing a blade of grass as he whittles at a twig or a chip.

But knives, the way some of us experience them, are, alongside the chisel, plane, and spokeshave, really beautiful and versatile tools. Of course the first thing we have to do is to get away from the coarse knife we usually have around and try to get hold of—or better yet, make—some knives that we can do more detailed work with, knives that fit our hand and the ways of carving suited to making certain things.

Most knives have an awkward thick blade with a much rounded tip: ours should be nicely tapered, thin and graceful. The whole knife with its definitely shaped handle is made to cut not away from, but towards. The carving we are talking about, small shapes and neat little roundings, minute details—this kind of carving is best done towards you. It is done with a very special action. You use your hand rather than your arm. You hold the knife close down and very tight. It should be a fairly short-bladed knife. Holding it firmly, you work it towards you with your fingers and forearm tense, gripping the knife exactly, firmly, and as you make these little cuts you are straining forward and yet at the same time there is a controlled braking because gripping tightly you can also stop at any time you want to twist your fingers and the blade and that way come out of any cut that seems to be going too deeply, or wrong.

Another thing you can do is turn the knife in your hand, away from you, and 'using the same tension cut away—not with the arm, but again

with only the fingers. Holding the piece of wood in your left hand you can, with the left thumb, press against the top of the knife blade and "dip" that cut as you are making it away from you. These are smooth, strong movements your hands will be doing, and the thumb along the back of the knife gives force to the cut: you get a lot of power that way.

I'm talking about this because not having the right knife often keeps us from making simple discoveries and doing what we really want. Like using beautiful but very hard wood for small fine details: handles, consoles for shelves, little latches, and various other personal touches. But with a good knife these impulses become real and enjoyable. You are carving with a razor-sharp knife, keeping all your cuts under perfect control. This kind of work is among the most gratifying I know because there is somehow a closeness, the sense of being one with your strong fingers and your eye: your imagination, everything is there. It's a dance! All of you is working a little piece of bone-hard wood into some delicate shape that is a combination of usefulness and joy.

With small knives that have handles to fit your hand as you cut towards you, you can work very, very accurately, making clean cuts, shaping the piece so it does not have to be rough sanded or filed, because working with sandpaper and files takes away from the pleasure of carving and also, I think, from some of the shapes themselves.

With time and interest comes skill: you learn to pivot the knife, twist it, use the very tip for the tiniest delicate shape. Your hands become hardened and awake, you can cut—crunch-deep and clean into a piece of secupira or horn-beam to round a friendly handle. The work comes easier, you are thinking less and feeling more, because you know your knife. And that is how it should be.

Unclassifieds

- > If you have any hand saws with nice comfortable handles, please bring them along to the October meeting, so we can trace them, photograph them, and/or see why they are nicer than others. Thanks, Guy Lautard.
- > 4-Sale: Delta 14" bandsaw, on open factory stand, with motor, all in very nice condition. Please phone Guy Lautard, at 604-922-4909.
- > Some dressed maple, walnut & alder boards - 4'-8" x 5'-6" x 3/4" - from \$9-15 each; 1 Indian Rosewood, 6x3/4x76" - \$50.00; Delta 12" wood planer - \$400; Shopsmith 4" jointer - \$300. Phone Bob Davidson at 604-929-5924 or e-mail at bdavid@axion.net.
- > Someone mentioned that photos of the 2x4 challenge made their way into WOOD Magazine – I'd sure like to see them, better still if anyone knows how to get a copy, that would be good too. Steve Hansen.

Typically, plans for these models consist of a series of contours (think of a topical map) which the model builder cuts from lumber, dressed to a specific thickness. These contours are known as "lifts". The lifts, when stacked from keel to deck will define the hull shape. Carving the waste and intuitively following the intended curves will yield the finished hull shape. "

Building (and Carving) a Model Ship using the Lift Method

By Steve Hansen

I recently built a model of a sailing yacht, the William Fife design: Minerva, launched at Perth, Scotland in 1888. Minerva has a cutter rig, meaning she is a sailing vessel with one mast and a bow sprit. This model was made from plans published by Woodenboat (www.woodenboat.com) and constructed from one 2x4x96" timber and entered into the 2002 "Pacific Woodworker's Guild - 2x4 Challenge". Woodenboat has a number of handsome models, not to mention many life-size boats that you can build. In particular, the plans I bought were to build/carve a "half hull" model, such as those that you see in antique stores and hanging above the fireplace at yacht clubs. Half hulls were originally intended as a working model for the naval architect to refine the shape of the hull, prior to laying out full-scale drawings for the builder. They also served as a method for preserving the design. I chose to modify the model by building both halves, yielding a complete hull. The original yacht was 56 feet, length overall and 38 feet at the water line. The scale of the model is 1/24, the model is 28 inches overall.

Typically, plans for these models consist of a series of contours (think of a topical map) which the model builder cuts from lumber, dressed to a specific thickness. These contours are known as "lifts". The lifts, when stacked from keel to deck will define the hull shape. Carving the waste and intuitively following the intended curves will yield the finished hull shape. As I found out, the hardest part, and the most important task, was the layout and shaping of the lifts. The carving was pretty easy. Along with the lift cutouts the plans included other perspectives to aid in the shaping of the hull: for example the sweep of the deck and details of the bow and rudder.

The project began with a little bit of prep work. In order to layout all the lifts for the model, I needed to convert a 2x4 x 96" into a 1/2 x 11 x 96". Yellow cedar had been chosen from Sunbury Cedar's rough 2x4 stack and was initially 9 feet long. After 8 months of drying I cut it down to 8 feet and ripped it to produce 3 boards 8' x 4" x about 5/8 thick. I jointed the edges and glued the three together to form an 8' board about 11" wide and then planed it down to 1/2". . . Let me tell you that trying to create a 1/2 inch board from 5/8 rough stock, that is warped in both directions, is no easy task – indeed there were a few spots on the

finished board that were "low". One small section of the board was cut out and ripped again in order to make a 1/16 inch board for the water line and a 1/4" board for the rail(top) lift. All of the jointing and thicknessing was done by machine. Many thanks to **Lor Pellet**, **Jan Hicks** and **Bill Fox** for the use of their machine tools. Once I had my 1/2" x 11" x 96" board and my lift patterns cutout from the plan, I juggled the lift patterns on the board until they all fit AND that any "low" areas would not see the light of day. I also made sure that there was sufficient material to cut out the ship's sticks(mast, boom, etc).

The fabrication of the lifts is the most important aspect in determining whether your finished hull is fair (boat-building jargon for smooth-looking lines). I cutout each of the lift patterns from the plans and tacked them directly onto the stock. I could have traced the patterns onto the stock, but I thought that method would introduce unnecessary error. I rough-cut the lifts on the bandsaw and then placed the blank on a flat working surface. I used a block plane, turned on its side to cut away the waste. Because I wanted to build a complete model, I flipped the pattern over (mirror image) after shaping one side of the lift, and carefully position it by using calipers against reference marks on the pattern - really quite easy. There were a few concave surfaces to plane, which could not be accomplished with a flat-soled plane. Not in possession of a compass plane or other convex plane, I fashioned my own by epoxying a square waste block onto the back(or sole) of a 1" bench chisel. The bevel of the chisel was slightly rounded and I could flip the chisel on its side and it would ride the work surface at 90 degrees. Epoxy adheres very well to steel. To remove just aim a propane torch at the epoxied area and it will melt.

As most ships have a waterline and/or may have different colours above and below the waterline, the builder has a convenient opportunity to use contrasting timber for these areas. If you are forced(because of your devotion to the principles and traditions of the 2x4 Challenge) to fashion your model from a single timber, then you can still achieve this affect by deferring the gluing of the corresponding sections until after all carving is complete. In the case of Minerva, I chose to implement a waterline and therefore glued everything BELOW the waterline together; glued everything ABOVE the

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waterline together; the waterline remained unglued as did the rail lift – later explained. Then I sandwiched the waterline between the two larger masses and clamped them together using long screws. To assist carving, a waste block was screwed to the top-most lift as a point for clamping onto my worktable. The hull was carved up side down.

Prior to carving, the stacked lifts resemble terraced Himalayan rice-paddies. To rough carve, I looked around my shop and found a small assortment of chisels, planes and rasps, none of which I was very adept at, nor did I know which ones would be best suited for the multitude of curves that make up the hull. After playing around with what I had, I found that a #5 gouge, 1.5 inches wide, worked very well on the yellow cedar to remove the bulk of the waste. I did not use a mallet because my sharp gouge, frequently touched up with a fine stone, easily cut the wood. There comes a point where you will need to switch to a finer tool to work down to the intersections of each lift, bearing in mind that the hull is curved, sometimes convex and sometimes concave. For this I used rasps where I could. Where my small arsenal of cutting tools could not reach due to compound curves, I employed coarse sandpaper backed with odd shaped blocks of wood.

After the basic hull was complete, I attended to the deck, which up until now was a level surface from stern to bow. It needed to be a curved: high at the stern; lower mid-ship; and higher again at the bow. Using reference marks and measurements from the plans, I made depth cuts across the deck at regular intervals. I chiseled out the waste, down to the cuts, with my trusty #5 gouge. Final smoothing of the deck was done with coarse sandpaper, backed with hardwood. Then, the rail lift was temporarily clamped in place, again with screws, and faired to the hull. After all carving and shaping was complete, I removed the clamping screws and painted the hull and re-assembled.

To make Minerva's "sticks" I used the 1/2" stock and turned on the lathe. The mast and main boom are 22" long and were interesting to turn. Aiding the process was using the hollow

spindle in the head stock with a 4-jaw chuck for clamping. I turned 5-6 inches at a time, supported by the tail stock. As one section was completed, I fed the stock further along. By the time the last section was being worked, I had 22 inches of 3/8 material spinning between centres. Note for you woodturners, the trick I found in turning long spindly things is to take deeper cuts, not shallower. Shallower cuts INCREASE the amount of flex and chatter on the work. Deeper cuts, with a finger wrapped around the turning is the ticket.

A few notes of interest:

- > Sanding paper was backed with stiff leather because the hard leather is pliable enough to follow the sweeping curves of the hull, but stiff enough take off the high spots and leave the low spots alone.
- > I recommend backing the lifts with cardboard to prevent warping and to make them stronger during the shaping – I used a spray mount adhesive for this. The lift patterns can be re-used(hint).
- > I used high quality model paint made by Floquil(acquired from a model train supplier), however I tried brushing it to unsatisfactory results. At press time, I am seeking an airbrush system or touch-up sprayer to properly finish the job.
- > Eventually the model will be rigged and above-deck features will be affixed. Exhaustive searches on the Internet and correspondence with various organizations such as the Royal Maritime Museum, London have yielded no specific photos or information to aid the layout of the masts and rigging for this ship. I have used photos of similar yachts of the era to guide the completion of this ship.

Sawdust Huddle Report

By Bill Ophoff

Vic Wasec put on a great sawdust huddle at **Bill Fox's** shop Saturday the 5th of October. He showed an interested group of twelve PWG members how he made incredibly flashy keep-sake boxes from scraps and off cuts. Vic started by talking about those little treasures of wood, too small for much of anything but too beautiful or expensive to throw away. He decided to jig up and make a series of pretty little boxes with his collection of treasures.

Vic brought these to a meeting last spring and talked about them during show and tell. Someone who shall remain nameless almost strong-armed him into putting on a sawdust huddle. Vic did a great job preparing for the huddle. He

had a series of boxes pre-made to various states of completion. As he went through the session he would bring one box along until a glue-up was required. He could set the clamped parts to one side and pick up the next box to advance it to a critical stage. Vic shared his process completely. I overheard quite a few conversations focused on how the presented techniques could be expanded upon. I am looking forward to the next few show and tells when I expect to see what comes out of the shops of those who were fortunate enough to attend this sawdust huddle.

Thanks to Bill Fox for the use of the shop and a special thanks to **Derek Yee** for the fine job he did organizing this event. Well done!

Woodworking Web Sites

By Guy Lautard

Below are several woodworking websites I've come across, and book marked. No sense in describing what is to be seen at each site - just go and have a look for yourself. If not of interest, delete and go do something else. Some (most??) may take a little digging beneath the first page that comes up to find the interesting stuff.

<http://www.toolbazaar.co.uk/restorations.htm>

<http://www.japanesebamboo.com/baskets2.html>

<http://www.nickandjack.com/berwagammad.html>

<http://www.cambiumbooks.com/> (books for woodworkers)

<http://www.windyhillwoods.com/Chuck-Wagon/ChuckWagonIntro.html>

<http://www.mv.com/ipusers/geyer/links.htm>

<http://showcase.netins.net/web/iabonsai/Grandstaff/various.html>

<http://grampasworkshop.virtualave.net/group1.html>

<http://www.kremer-pigmente.de/englisch/homee.htm> (Source of pigments for paints etc)

<http://www.mv.com/ipusers/geyer/dtsaw.htm>

<http://www.haltaylor.com/chairs.htm> (This guy offers rocking chair kits, and will send you (for a price), a computer-generated set of rocking chair plans, custom fitted to your physical dimensions.

For more adventure, sometimes, backspacing back into the URL as given will take you to a home page that had lots more places to go besides the page provided by the URL given here. Killing off everything back to <http://www.windyhillwoods.com> is a good example of that.