

# Knot Knews

Monthly Newsletter of the Collins Woodworkers

October 1996

Vol. 2, No. 2

*Next Meeting: Tuesday, October 15th 5:00 p.m. at Ar-Jay Building Products, Inc*

## October Field Trip

The October meeting is a private tour of the cabinet shop at Ar-Jay Building Products, Inc. Don't go to the Main Plant cafeteria as usual; instead we will assemble at 5:00 p.m at the Ar-Jay facility, 1515 Blairs Ferry Rd. NE. Here is a great chance to pick up some ideas from the pro's.

## November Program

Our November 19 meeting will be back in the Main Plant cafeteria. We will present a video by cabinetmaker Frank Klausz in which he demonstrates how he makes dovetailed drawer carcasses in 20 minutes time. The video is nearly an hour long and we plan a live demonstration of Frank's dovetail technique at the meeting. Plan to come and bring a friend. The presentation will begin right at 5:00 and the meeting will last until 6:30.

We hope to be set up so members can try the techniques themselves; this may include both western and Japanese saw methods.

If you have a Black&Decker Workmate you'd be willing to bring to the meeting, please let us know.

## Chips & Shavings

By Wayne Hanson

At a Wood Show in the Twin Cities last weekend, I purchased *Woodshop Dust Control* by Sandor Nagyszalanczy for the Library. I have been skimming the book and it appears to cover a full range of topics including: the differences in dust masks, single stage vs.. two stage, homebuilt cleaners and collectors, cyclones, portable collectors and permanent systems, and calculating air volume requirements for a system. I have approx. \$12 left from the original book fund to which many of us contributed \$5 each.

I'm planning on bringing a stack of registration forms to the Ar-Jays meeting for anyone to join the club. Be sure to let your friends and associates know about the club and bring them to meeting with you. We'd like to get all our annual dues collected during October of possible.

## The American Woodworker Show

By Mark Clark

"Hey Dad, do you know about the American Woodworker Show?" My daughter Manda had called from her home in suburban Chicago and was excitedly giving me the news. Manda has discovered woodworking and now calls two or three times a week to ask questions or tell me what new (old) tool she's found or which book she's just finished reading. I figured the show would be fun and agreed to drive into Chicago to take her to the show.

The show featured ninety-four exhibitors covering every conceivable type of woodworking machine, tool, fixture, or related gadget.. Also featured were thirteen of the best-known master craftsmen and educators doing demonstrations and teaching seminars. Separate classrooms were set up for the seminars which were an hour and thirty minutes long and required a separate registration. Also on hand was Norm Abrams of "This Old House" and "New Yankee Workshop" fame. Norm mostly signed autographs but I was told he did perform one free demonstration each day of the show.

We arrived Saturday morning, bought tickets and registered for Ian Kirby's seminar: "Hand-Tool Woodworking for the Small Shop." Kirby's seminar was about to begin so we found the assigned room and took seats. If you haven't had the pleasure of hearing Kirby in person, plan to do so at the first opportunity. Not only is he a master craftsman, he is a wonderfully entertaining speaker as well. He talked about the kinds of tools one needs, how the tools are used, the

way to organize the steps in any project, and then he added an additional thought. "Only in America," he said in his native British accent "would people think it natural to buy tools, select a project plan, and produce a finished piece." "Imagine someone buying a violin then showing up at the symphony hall and asking the conductor where in the orchestra they are to sit. Why, the conductor would respond 'Sit in a room over there and practice for fifteen years or so; when you have learned to play, come back and we'll have a listen.'" His point, of course, was that everything we do involves acquiring a skill and woodworking is no different. Buying tools won't make us craftsmen any more than buying a violin will make us musicians. But if we spend a little time practicing the use of a tool or performing a complex operation, the effort will be apparent in the quality of our finished work.

We spent the rest of the day on the floor of the show watching demonstrations and talking with many of the master craftsmen. The masters were quite accessible since most of the attendees formed a three-block line, doubling back on itself, waiting to pay money for Norm's autograph. We talked with Frank Klausz, a well known cabinet maker and teacher, and watched in amazement as he made a perfect hand-cut dovetail joint in three minutes ten seconds. We talked with Don Weber—featured in the current issue of *American Woodworker*—about chair-making and watched in fascination as he turned chair legs and spreaders on his home-made foot powered lathe. We looked on in awe as Toshio Odate demonstrated the use of Japanese water stones and Japanese planes. The Starrett Co. booth was right next to Toshio's and they measured his shavings with a machinists dial caliper at 0.0015 in.

Other continuous demonstrations included chip carving, carcass joinery, turning, relief carving, coopering, scroll saw basics, and veneering. There was more information and more great shop tips than a person could absorb in a single day. We took notes on some of them and collected literature as we went; I don't know whether I'll ever get around to trying everything but I'd sure like to.

Manda had a great time (well I guess her dad did too) and learned that the best craftsmen use a combination of power tools and hand tools. They use electric jointers and thickness planers to speed the job of stock preparation and then use hand planes to achieve

a perfect finish on the work. (Kirby neither sands nor scrapes his work.) Electric saws are used but the cuts are made a little wide to allow for the final planing to take place. Dovetails are cut by hand, mortises and tenons are done both by hand and machine. Perhaps the most significant observation was that, after a lifetime of training and experience, the masters are still working hard to find ways to improve their methods and skills.

## Woodworking/Tool-reviews

By Jim Parent

### Miter Saws

- The WORKBENCH Guide to Power Miter Saws - Workbench June 1988.
- Getting an Angle on Compound Miters - Fine Homebuilding January 1990.
- Power Mitersaws - Wood February 1992
- Tool Review Sliding Compound Miter Saws - Woodworkers Journal January 1993.
- Buyers Guide to Sliding Compound Miter Saws - American Woodworker April 1993.
- Sliding Compound Miter Saws - Fine Woodworking May 1993.

### Which type of dado blade should I buy? Dial (wobble type) or Stacking (chipper type) ?

The wobble type is very simple to use with infinite settings between approximately 1/4 inch and 13/16 inch. It does not produce true right angle cuts because of the design.

The chipper type doesn't have the same infinite setting for width. You can achieve nearly infinite settings by adding shims with thicknesses of 1/32, 1/64, 1/128, etc. It will cut a square bottom on the dado, but it will also leave 2 grooves on the edges of the dado. The reason for this is that the blades are slightly larger

than the chippers. The larger blades are to reduce the splintering. The blades can be reground to be equal to the size of the chippers at the possible cost of increased splintering. Some say the grooves are a benefit because they provide relief for gluing joints.

The August 1991 *Fine Woodworking* further studies the features of the various types of dado blades. How do I cut the perfect dado if both types of

dado blades have shortcomings? Your best bet would be to cut it with a router.

### Interested in wood finishing?

Try the *Woodfinishing Book* - by Michael Dresdner.

### What size drill bit do I use for a wood screw?

Screw Gage No.	Shank Hole	Shank Size	Pilot Soft-wood	Pilot Hard-wood
0	1/16	.060	1/64	1/32
1	5/64	.073	1/32	1/32
2	3/32	.086	1/32	3/64
3	7/64	.099	3/64	1/16
4	7/64	.112	3/64	1/16
5	1/8	.125	1/16	5/64
6	9/64	.138	1/16	5/64
7	5/32	.151	1/16	3/32
8	11/64	.164	5/64	3/32
9	3/16	.177	5/64	7/64
10	3/16	.190	3/32	7/64
11	13/64		3/32	1/8
12	7/32	.216	7/64	1/8
14	1/4	.242	7/64	9/64
16	17/64	.268	9/64	5/32
18	19/64	.294	9/64	3/16
20	21/64	.320	11/64	13/64

## Wreck Dot Woodworking

(Great thoughts from the Net)

### How sharp is *Scary Sharp*?

This describes an experimental sharpening system known as *The D&S Scary Sharp(TM) System*. The text is condensed from an archived message thread originally posted in the USENET newsgroup *rec.woodworking*. The longer version is more entertaining and definitely stranger though it may not contain any more actual information. The long version will be placed in the club library or you can simply scan the Net for "Scary Sharp."

If you try this technique and find it of value, please consider giving the rest of us a demonstration at one of our meetings. It has the potential to eliminate the need to buy expensive stones and could be a real boon to anyone needing to sharpen a chisel or a plane iron.

The finer grits of wet-or-dry (silicon carbide) abrasive paper can be found at an auto finishing supply house such as Borgenson Automotive Paint on 14<sup>th</sup> Ave. SE. Heavy plate glass (1/4 in. or thicker), used to provide a truly flat surface, may be found at a glass specialty house such as C.R. Glass Co. on 8<sup>th</sup> Ave. SE.

### *Condensed Version*

*or*

### *How to sharpen a plane blade with sandpaper.*

Mercilessly butchered into a Condensed "How to" Version by J. Gunterman from the Original by Steve Lamantia.

To lap the back behind the cutting bevel: Use a very light coatings of 3M "77" spray adhesive to temporarily glue small 1-1/2" x 3-1/2" rectangular pieces of sandpaper along the edge of a sheet of 1/4" plate-glass.

The paper to use is Aluminum Oxide in grits 50, 80, and 100, and Silicon Carbide (wet-or-dry to you lay people) in grits of 150, 180, 220, 320, 400, 600, 1200, and 2000. The plate glass should be placed with its edge flush to the edge of the workbench. Grits can be skipped, if desired, but more time on each grit will then be required to fully remove the scratches from the previous grit. Using the gradual progression as listed, however, will require only about a minute or so with each grit."

Lap the end one inch of the back of the iron on each grit in turn. You could use it wet or dry. About every ten seconds or so, stop and brush off the sandpaper with a whisk broom and wipe the blade off on your shirt.

About ten minutes after starting, you should have gone from 50 grit on up to 2000, and there will be a mirror finish on the back of that iron the likes of which must be seen. Then jig the blade in a Veritas honing jig or go it by hand--

Clamp the blade down in the Veritas blade-holder device, taking care to have the bevel resting on the glass perfectly along both edges. Adjust the micro-bevel cam on the jig up to its full two-degree micro-bevel setting -- and hone away on the 2000-grit.

Flip the blade over on the sandpaper several times, hone and lap, hone and lap, each time gentler and gentler, to remove the little bit of wire edge. The resulting little thin secondary bevel should be quite shiny by this time. Remove the blade from the jig, and perform the "shave some arm hairs off" test, or the sharpness test of your own choice. Of course, the ultimate test of a plane iron's sharpness is what it does on wood.

When it is all done, peel the sandpaper from the glass and throw it away. Then, scrape the little bit of residual adhesive from the glass with a razor blade, a quick wipedown with acetone on a piece of paper towel, and the cleanup is done in a minute.

No oil, no water, no mess, no glaze or flatness problems to worry about, and a cutting edge that is Scary-Sharp (TM).

# Knot Knews

Monthly Newsletter of the Collins Woodworkers

November 1996

Vol. 2, No. 3

*Next Meeting: Tuesday, November 19th 5:00 p.m. at Main Plant Cafeteria*

## November Program

Our November 19 meeting will be back in the Main Plant cafeteria. We will present a video by cabinetmaker Frank Klausz in which he demonstrates how he makes hand-dovetailed drawer carcasses in 20 minutes time. The video is nearly an hour long and we plan a hands-on demonstration of Frank's dovetail technique at the meeting. Plan to come and bring a friend. The presentation will begin right at 5:00 and the meeting will last until 6:30.

We will be set up so members can try the techniques themselves; this may include both western and Japanese saw methods.

If you have a Black&Decker Workmate you'd be willing to bring to the meeting, please call Mark Clark at extension 53872.

## December Meeting

Our December 17 meeting will feature a short presentation by Emil Krepcik on router tables and a discussion of building bird houses and feeders by Jim Parent. If you've been thinking of attracting wild birds to your house, this could be the nudge you're looking for.

## Future Meetings

Plans for future meetings will include: display and demonstration of a wide variety of portable tools (Jan. 21); field trip to Puckett Tools & Fasteners for a professional demonstration of Bessey clamps (Feb. 18); and a program on finishing techniques (Mar. 18).

Many of these programs will be presented by your fellow club members. Do you have skills or equipment you'd be willing to share with the group? You don't need to be a polished public speaker, just share your knowledge in your own words. Think it over

then sign up. Program dates are open from April on through the summer.

## Your Input Requested

We want our monthly meetings to be events you won't want to miss. We hope you find the Collins Woodworkers Guild so valuable that you will want to bring friends and co-workers with you to meetings.

In order to meet our goals and serve our members, we need your input. Let your elected officers know what interests *you*. Whether your shop is full of hand tools, stationary power tools, or is somewhere in between, our aim is to plan programs that are immediately useful to the majority of members.

Do you need to make that special molding to repair an antique hutch? Perhaps you are interested in musical instruments or jewelry boxes or maybe you just need to make new kitchen cupboards. Let us know what projects you're planning and which techniques you'd like to acquire.

If you'd be willing to share something you've learned with the other members, we would like to know about that as well.

To provide input, contact any of the following folks or just come to a meeting and make your feelings known. The Collins Woodworkers Guild will give back only what you put into it.

### Contacts:

Wayne Hanson	55893	138-150
Emil Krepcik	52999	106-181
Jim Parent	53012	124-317
Roger Thompson	52211	124-100

## Wreck Dot Woodworking

(Great thoughts from the Net)

### General Woodworking Tips

by Gary Straub

1. Lay out your lumber and figure which board will be used for what part, taking care to observe grain and color. Try to make each part compliment other related parts. Example: don't laminate a straight grained piece to a wildly figured piece, unless intentionally.
2. Don't cut any wood until you are sure of where you want to cut. Think and re-think this point, as it only takes a second to screw up a lot of planning.
3. Whenever possible make the piece a little larger than needed. There are many things which can screw up a cut. Such as: internal stress can cause a perfectly straight board to move, planers can snipe, jointing and sanding/planing can take more wood than expected. It is far easier to remove a little wood than to replace it.
4. Mark all pieces as to where they go as soon as you determine this, unless you enjoy jigsaw puzzles.:-)
5. Always test any machine setup on a scrap piece, preferably from the same lumber as the piece. Be careful that the scrap isn't off the end. This will make it thinner.
6. When hand planing a surface, do the backside first. This will prepare you for any surprises. The same applies to sanding, so the face side doesn't get damaged while sanding the back.
7. Always dust everything off. Many mysterious dings, and poor fits are the result of a small chip or two. A small chip against a fence can cause mis-alignment. Chips under a board going through the surface planer can cause uneven planing. A small chip on the shoulder of a tenon can keep it from snugging up. etc.
8. Try to split the line when sawing. Sawing on either side of the line can make for an almost perfect joint, splitting it will usually be right on the mark. This depends on the thickness of the line. A thick line will be easy to split but you can still be off. Keep your pencil sharp.
9. Any lines which will ultimately be cut with a chisel should be made with a knife. A knife mark will act as a guide for the chisel. It is hard to keep a chisel straight on a pencil line. Also any cross-cuts should be scored with a knife first. This eliminates any tendency for ragged edges.
10. Always test your fits prior to gluing. It is best to clamp your pieces together as if you were gluing, first off. This will prevent any surprises with glue on the pieces, and will assure that you have all surprises with glue on the pieces, and will assure that you have all the clamps that you need and ready to use. If you find that you need to really crank on the clamp to get a good fit, you probably need to make an alteration. The quickest way to glue failure is to put unnecessary stress on the part. If you haven't done so now is the time to mark every piece as to where it goes. If you haven't done so, now is the time to mark every piece as to where it goes. If everything fits fine in that order why take a chance, even though many parts are 'identical'.
11. It is best not to wipe off the wet glue after clamping, as it will spread the glue around and make finishing difficult. However the glue should be removed before it is cured, if it is a water based glue. The moisture in the glue raises the grain a little and when it hardens the moisture is trapped. Then when it is removed later the wood shrinks and a glue line becomes perceptible. If you use a scraper or chisel when the glue skins over it will come off in nice strips. Washing the glue off with a wet cloth works but you must be careful to get all off or it will be everywhere.
12. A very sharp chisel will remove any glue from inside corners. If carefully done you can skim a little wood with the glue, making sure there is no glue left to obstruct the finish.
13. A sharp hand scraper works very well to even up mating surfaces, after gluing.
14. When finishing its VERY important to allow the finish to dry well before sanding or steel wool between coats. Bits of sand dust or steel wool in the corners are a tell sign of preceding to fast. Use a vacuum and tack rags judiciously throughout the finishing process. It is imperative to treat the finishing process with as much care as you put into

the building process. A good finish can make a mediocre piece look great and a poor finish can make a great piece look mediocre.

15. Keep your expectations high, but realistic. Fine workmanship is acquired through practice. If each piece you make is a little better than the last than you should feel good. These are merely observation and are not purported to be anything else. Part 2 Machines, part 3, Handtools, part 4, finishing. Are in the works, however if this is felt to be wasted bandwidth, let me know.

16. Enjoy!

### **Web Sites of Interest**

If you have an interest in hand planes and your home computer can access the Internet's World Wide Web you may find these sites worth visiting.

<http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~alf/en/en.html>

<http://www.pangea.com/~rock/oldtools/>

There are also several dealers in old tools active on the Internet. Two worth mentioning are Thomas Bruce ([trb2@cornell.edu](mailto:trb2@cornell.edu)) and Patrick Leach ([leach@bedfor.progress.com](mailto:leach@bedfor.progress.com)). We have not yet dealt with these gentlemen but others on the Net seem to say nice things about them.

If you happen to run across an interesting Web site, discussion list, or news group while ``surfing'' the net, pass it along and we'll publish it here so others can check it out.

# **Knot Knews**

Monthly Newsletter of the Collins Woodworkers

**December 1996**

**Vol. 2, No. 4**

*Next Meeting: Tuesday, December 17th 5:00 p.m. at Main Plant Cafeteria*

## **December Program**

Our December 17 meeting features a presentation by Jim Parent on bird houses. A few good bird houses, built and placed now, will help attract birds to your yard when nesting season arrives. This is the time of year when wild birds must spend more time looking for food and a continuously stocked feeder will become a popular gathering spot for seed eating species.

In addition to Jim's presentation, Emil Krepcik is bringing a router table and discussing its features and construction. If you are planning to build a router table, you may be able to pick up a few tips from Emil.

## **January Meeting**

Our January 21 meeting features a portable tool extravaganza. Members will bring their own tools to the meeting for a big "show and tell" event. This will give members the chance to see which tools others find useful and to learn something about tools they may be considering for purchase.

Naturally, the success of this event depends on *you*. Please consider bringing a few of your favorite portable tools to the January meeting so they can be displayed for all to see. You won't need to speak in front of the group, just explain your tool(s) to other members as they stop by.

We're looking for all types of portable tools, though naturally we don't want to wind up with 40 routers and cordless drills (some... just not 40). Dig out that unusual tool that you may not use often but is a real gem when you need it. Tools need not be electric; they can be air driven, hand powered, new or old. The key is to bring portable tools you enjoy using and that others might find interesting.

## **Goodbye Old Friend?**

This may be the last issue of *Knot Knews* you'll receive. Beginning with the January newsletter, we will be trimming our subscription list to include only *paid* members. New prospective members will be given a short (say three months) subscription but if they elect not to join, they will be dropped from the subscription list as well.

We hope you are a paid member. If not, look on bulletin boards for meeting notices and drop in when you can. We'll always be glad to see you.

## **Future Meetings**

Plans for future meetings will include: a field trip to Puckett Tools & Fasteners for a professional demonstration of Bessey clamps (Feb. 18); and a program on finishing techniques (Mar. 18).

Other future meeting topics include picture framing and matting, biscuit joining tools and techniques, the health dangers of wood dust and ways to reduce this hazard, and tuning hand planes for precision work. We hope you will express your thoughts on these ideas and help us plan the kind of meetings you look forward to attending.

## **Hardwood Sources**

Jim Parent is taking on the task of updating our list of wood mills and sources. Jim will be asking for volunteer help at the December meeting. If you know of any sawmills or suppliers within a hundred mile or so radius of Cedar Rapids, be sure to let Jim know. If you can help with information on business hours, species availability, prices, phone number and directions, it will certainly be a big help to Jim.

## Wreck Dot Woodworking

(Great thoughts from the Net)

### Tree of the Month "Oak"

Characteristics of the sapwood of oak is white to very light brown, while the heartwood is light to dark brown in the white oak group and reddish brown in the red oak group. Oak wood has a coarse texture; it is heavy, straight-grained, hard, tough, very stiff, and strong. Fast-grown oak, with wide rings, is stronger and heavier than slow-grown oak.

**Working Properties:** Oak wood has good working properties. It machines and glues well and holds fasteners extremely well. It tends to split when nailed, unless pre-drilled. Oak finishes well, but shrinks considerably.

**Durability:** The oaks are rated with respect to resistance to heartwood decay as follows: Very resistant burr oak, chestnut oak, Gambel oak, Oregon oak, post oak and white oak. Moderately resistant swamp chestnut oak. Slightly to nonresistant black oak and red oak.

**Preservation:** The heartwood of the white oak group is resistant to impregnation with preservatives, whereas that of the red oak group is more easily penetrated.

### Carpenter's Clamps

Having trouble holding your project together while the glue dries? Here's How:

Many budding carpenters have all the hand tools they think they need... until they find they need a second pair of hands to hold things together. That's when any of the various types of woodworking clamps are worth their weight in gold! "C" clamps, pipe clamps and spring clamps are just a few of the kinds that are available. When using them, be sure to spread clamp pressure by using several clamps rather than one or two, so as to protect the workpiece. Always use blocking between the clamp's jaws and the workpiece to prevent marring. When tightening a clamp, use your hand, not a wrench or pliers as over-tightening could damage the project surface.

### Storm Door Maintenance

Want to prolong the finish and weather-stripping on your front door? Here's How:

If your storm door is exposed to direct sun, change over to screens early in the spring and wait until the end of fall before putting the storm windows back on. The windows can act as a greenhouse, heating up the space between the two doors, causing weather-stripping and the finish to deteriorate quickly. When choosing metal replacement screens, check the compatibility of the metal screens with the metal of the door. In some cases, dissimilar metals in contact with each other will hasten corrosion.

### Web Sites of Interest

If your home computer can access the Internet's World Wide Web you may find these sites worth visiting.

<http://www.augusthome.com/welcome.html>

This is the homepage of the company that publishes Woodsmith and Shopnotes. You can search their back issue data base for particular articles and subjects. If you're looking for project plans, this could be a valuable resource.

<http://www.escape.ca/~denisroy/>  
<http://www.lowes.com>

These sites feature birdhouse plans. The first one has plans for a purple martin house, helpful in keeping the mosquito population down. The second site was referenced as containing general birdhouse plans.

If you happen to run across an interesting Web site, discussion list, or news group while "surfing" the net, pass it along and we'll publish it here so others can check it out.