NEWSLETTER

www.emgw.org
May 2008

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From the Editor

By Chris Kovacs

After serving as the President of the Guild for the past two years, Frank Woolley has recently resigned from his post and will be moving to Pennsylvania. It has been great working with Frank and I think he has done a great job in organizing the Guild programs and providing excellent leadership. Frank's knowledge of old style woodworking and his incredible skills have benefited the membership tremendously. In case you have not had the opportunity to see Frank's work, you can do so by looking at the Reader's Gallery section in the latest issue of Fine Woodworking magazine. Frank will be heading to Pennsylvania and will continue making contributions to the Western Pennsylvania Woodworker's guild. I would like to thank Frank for all of his contributions to the guild, his hosting of several meetings and the numerous conversations I have had with him.

In order to keep the Guild from imploding due to the leadership vacuum left by Frank's departure, our very own webmaster/vice President John Nitzsche has graciously stepped into the role of Guild President. John's first task as our new President has been to appoint a nominating committee to find a new president. John will be resigning from the President post at the June meeting. The nominating committee, Jules Siegel and Jack Murphy, have been commissioned to find nominees for the President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer positions. If you have any interest in seeking out one of these positions, please contact either Jules (j.siegel@rcn.com) or Jack (Jack.Murphy@Monotypelmaging.com).

Our next meeting will be held on **May 10 at 9am at my shop in Groton, MA (132 Whitman Road)**. We will be covering a variety of topics that day that all center on veneering. We will be showing you how different veneering techniques including a vacuum bag, homemade veneer press, contact cements, string inlays and how to make your own veneer. We will also discuss different adhesives for veneering, edge banding and sources for veneers. The meeting will start with a brief business meeting at 9 and then we will get into the veneering until noon.

With regards to the usual refreshments served at the meetings we (the executive board) have decided to make some changes. The cost of providing these refreshments for the year is the equivalent of bringing in one paid speaker. We have all benefited greatly from the invited speakers and the executive board felt that it would be better for the membership to use the funds for a paid speaker instead of coffee and donuts. So, starting at our May meeting, we will be serving Dunkin Donuts coffee, donuts and other refreshments paid for by the Guild. Sitting right next to the coffee will be a small donation jar. If you are drinking coffee and enjoying the morning treats, please make a small contribution to the Coffee Fund. The monies collected will be returned to the Guild bank account and help offset the cost of the refreshments. This will ensure adequate funds for future paid speakers. Thank you for your contributions.

At the last executive board meeting we began discussing topics for next year. So far, our preliminary list contains topics such as plane tuning (with a planning competition thrown in for fun), back yard logging, a show and tell of member's work, jigs and fixtures, segmented wood turning, shop safety and machine techniques, tuning machinery and more. The Guild is for the members and should be directed by the members, if there is a topic that interests you please bring it up to John Nitzsche either by emailing or talking to him.

Sanding

By Chris Kovacs

Believe it or not, sanding is a much more complicated and involved process than simply sliding a piece of gritty paper across the wood. A really good sanding job greatly improves your chances of a successful finish while a hasty, sloppy sanding job guarantees poor finishing. I find it interesting that the job of sanding is often relegated to the lowest skilled person in the shop. It is often the least desirable task and is often the proving ground for new employees. To me, this is a bit backwards, after all, the sanding process is often one step away from the finishing step which means a lot of time and effort have already been invested in a in the project only to be left to the unskilled hands of a low skilled employee. For those with no employees, you are the one for whom the onerous task of sanding is bestowed upon. Over the years, I have done a lot of sanding and have come up with a few strategies to improve my sanding results, reduce the time spent sanding and in some ways make sanding more tolerable.

First off, let me state that sanding is difficult to do well and way to easy to do poorly. There are a number of tools that make sanding easier. I will start by listing the various sanding tools in my shop and will later describe, for instance, how each one is used to sand a five piece raised panel door. From largest to smallest I use a 37" wide belt sander, 36" horizontal belt sander, 6" soft pad random orbit with a large (5mm) orbit pattern, 5" hard pad RO sander with small (3mm) orbit pattern, ¼" sheet rubber sanding block, various wood sticks to wrap sand paper around, and finally just sand paper held in my hand. For me, sanding is an on going process, it is not simply the last step, I am sanding different parts at different times during a project. The goal is to sand parts when they are easiest to sand. In a five piece door that has top and bottom rails and a raised panel the sanding sequence is as follows:

1) The inside and outside edges are sanded using my wide belt sander (120 grit) to remove mill marks. This is easy to do as individual pieces as opposed to a glued up door. I do both edges because it is fast on my wide belt and this ensures that I cannot accidentally assemble a door with the non-sanded edge facing the panel.
2) The raised panel is sanded in the wide belt using 120 grit paper. The raised profile is run and then the raised profile is sanded using a combination of RO sanders, sanding sponges, folded sandpaper and sanding blocks. The end grain is sanded first to about 150 and then the long grain edges are sanded to 150. Do the front and the back. Next, use a RO sander to sand the face of the panel with 150 grit. Finish sanding the panel using a 150 grit sanding block with the grain on the face front and back.
3) Assemble the door
4) I have the luxury of sanding the entire door through the wide belt sander. This flushes the stiles and rails and because the raised panel is slightly below the surface of the stiles and rails, it is not sanded in this process. If you do not have a wide belt you could use a belt sander but be very careful and make sure to remove wood evenly from all surfaces. Do not focus on the corners or you will have a door that is not flat.
5) At this point, I have cross-grain scratches left from my wide belt that need to be removed. It is important to start random orbit sanding at the same grit as the belt saner. In my case, that is usually 120. I start out with my larger, more aggressive 6" sander and move around the frame of the door. Again, do not focus on the corners you must remove even amounts of wood around the entire frame. Here is where time spent making accurate joiner is time well spent.
6) Once the 6" sander has removed the cross-grain scratched, I switch to the 5" hard pad sander that leaves a smaller orbit pattern. I go up to 150 grit and stop.
7) The door is then fit to the opening and trimmed on the saw. As expected, the nicely sanded edge has been removed and now I use the horizontal sander to remove the saw marks. A rubber sanding block or a piece of 120 grit paper and a block of wood work well
8) Using small pieces of sandpaper, the profile on the stiles and rails and any other sharp edges need to be eased. I usually prefer a somewhat worn piece of paper for this task. Worn paper is softer, fits the profile shape better and is not too aggressive. I usually use 150 grit to knock off sharp edges and smooth the profiles.
9) At this point the sanding is complete. I stop at 150 grit because the vast majority of my finishes are sprayed and sanding beyond 150 grit has no improvement on the finish quality. If you were using oil or shellac, I would recommend sanding to at least 220 grit at each step in the process.

The goal of sanding is to remove mill marks and prep the surface to accept the finish. Therefore, know your finish and know when you have sanded enough. I like to sand in bright light and I get my nose pretty close to the surface looking for mill marks or scratches from coarser grits that have not removed properly. Do not skip a grit, move from 120 to 150 to 180 and so forth. Skipping a grit means the next finer paper has to remove some pretty significant scratches. This takes time and effort on your part.

Sanding should occur throughout the entire construction process, not just at the end. You will get better results by doing a little sanding at each step. By the end of the job you will not have agonized for hours sanding instead, you will have spent five minutes here and five minutes there sanding. By doing small amounts of sanding, you can focus better, work a little slower and be more diligent. In the end, the finished piece will look much better.

Please keep in mind that sanding requires a few safety precautions with regards to the fine dust. Hook all of your sanders (random orbital and belt sanders) up to vacuums or work in front of an exhaust fan. A vacuum that turns on with the sander is the best. The Festool and Fein vacuums are the quietest vacuums and do and excellent job of filtering very fine dust.

Down draft tables are a great idea but the best is a vacuum connected directly to the sander. My sanders are essentially dust free. When I sand by hand, I often use an exhaust fan and an open window to move air across my bench. This is not as good a downdraft table, but adequate. My larger sanding machines are all connected to a central dust collector and do a pretty good job of capturing the fine dust.

Happy sanding.

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From the Field

Hurricane Katrina, the Formosan Termite and the Destruction of New Orleans

One man's opinion

By Adrian Juttner

Underground warrens and nests of the introduced Formosan termite are huge! Studies done by the New Orleans Mosquito and Termite Control Board in the 1990s showed that termites mined under St. Charles Avenue, connecting the trees in Lafayette Park with infested Gallier Hall. Ongoing studies in Armstrong Park and elsewhere map colonies hundreds of feet long and 30 feet deep.

Louisiana State University studies show termite activity in the levees and flood walls. New Orleans sits atop hundreds of feet of alluvium (sand, clay, silt, etc.) laced with prehistoric trees and woody debris. Termites arising from the river and lake beds eat through creosote pilings around the Canal Street ferry, wharves and fishing camps.

Heavy termite activity in trees was observed, and documented in the Adrian's Tree Service database, at the sites of all the levee breaches. The first tree termite treatment, using a combination of an insect-killing fungus and massive water injection into a tree trunk, was done on a 43-inch DBH Laurel oak in front of 7035 Derbes St. on May 5, 2006. The tree accepted 10,000 gallons of water from a garden hose unimpeded. The water flow was shut off to mitigate the size of the water bill (about $80) for the homeowner. This was just four blocks from the 17th Street Canal levee breach.

A termite-infested tree felled during Katrina in New Orleans Courtesy of Adrian Juttner

On March 1, 2001, a group of infested trees at 1315 Royal St. accepted 70,000 gallons of water – again unimpeded – with a termite treatment. Swarming in subsequent years in an entire city block of the French Quarter has been reduced to nil.

During the week of June 4, 2002, a group of a dozen infested trees under the Skyview Apartments in Algiers accepted 500,000 gallons of water laced with biological termiticides in an unimpeded, unlimited flow.

Since May 2000, Adrian's Tree Service has treated more than 1,000 termite infested trees using biological termiticides and massive amounts of water. All of these treatments are documented in our database. Where does this water go? It goes into a massive warren of subterranean nests and passageways that have been mined out by Formosan termites over 60 years. Sometimes native termite colonies or small Formosan termite colonies accept only a limited amount of water – say 500 gallons. Water begins to bubble up out of the ground in the vicinity and the flow must be shut off. Sometimes the access to the warren is narrow or plugged up with termite dung and the tree will accept water at only a dribble. To increase the flow, we hold the nozzle into the drill hole in the tree trunk and raise the pressure and flow to the maximum. Sometimes this blows the bung and allows water to flow freely into the underground warren at an acceptable rate. Tree stumps with termite cavities can accept the full force and flow of a 2-inch line from a fire hydrant.

During Hurricane Katrina, the storm surge blew the bungs under the levees and allowed water to flow freely into the neighborhoods via the underground warrens and toppled infested trees. This is basic hydrology – water seeks its own level. Since the canals are at sea level and connected to Lake Pontchartrain, the water will flow in from a single breach until the entire city is flooded. And the entire levee system – including the Mississippi River levees – is undermined. It is possible that 60 years of mining on the lakefront will limit the surge to the fragile levees, but this termite scenario puts the recovery of most of New Orleans in doubt.

Adrian Juttner is owner of Adrian's Tree Service, a TCIA member company, in New Orleans. ■

TCI will pay $100 for published "From the Field" articles. Submissions become the property of TCI and are subject to editing for grammar, style and length. Entries must include the name of a company and a contact person. Send to: Tree Care Industry, 3 Perimeter Road, Unit 1, Manchester, NH 03101, or mmuk@treecareindustry.org.

The Next Meeting

Saturday May 10, 2008 Veneering
9:00 am until noon

Chris Kovacs, Bill Karp, Pat Everett and Jim Russell with cover a variety of veneering topics. We will have demonstrations of vacuum bagging, veneer pressing, cutting your own veneers, edge banding, string inlay and more.

Location: 132 Whitman Road, Groton, MA 01450
(978) 448-2567

Joe Aeillo and one of his many ingenious devices; a coping machine for cope and stick doors

Another satisfied customer.

Membership

If you would like further information about the Eastern Massachusetts Guild of Woodworkers, please email Phyllis Jaffee at pgjaffee@29designs.com. Yearly dues are $40 and payable each September.

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Schedule

What:	Where:	When:
Hand tools and fine woodworking	Phil Lowe, Beverly MA	February 9, 2008
Coloring wood	Bob Judd, Dedham, MA	March 8
Design elements	Jonathan Marks	April 12
Veneering and vacuum bagging	Chris Kovacs and others	May 10
Guild Picnic (rain free hopefully)	Tom Fama	June 14

FEBRUARY 2008

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