



From The Shop



The newsletter of the Lehigh Valley Woodworker's Guild

Issue 08.2008

Next Meeting: August 19th, 2008 (3rd Tuesday!)

Location: Lehigh Co. Senior Center
1633 Elm Street
Allentown, PA

Title: The incomparable Bill Grumbine turning TOOL HANDLES and other doo dads.

July Highlights:

Mr Jeffrey's Third World Woodworking System – Conquering problems we would never imagine.

Aka – OK, send a Unisaw. (And you plug it in WHERE?)



Jeffrey Lohr – “Mr Jeffrey” – explains some of the basics of one of the jigs used with Mr Jeffrey’s Third World Woodworking System

The presentation for the July meeting was somewhat different than any other we have had and very revealing. Jeffrey Lohr, a local professional woodworker and well known in his chosen area of Arts and Crafts style and Freeform furniture was the featured speaker along with his student from Ghana, Abubakar Abdullai. Abu is here as a result of having contacted Jeffrey from Ghana in an effort to help him in finding solutions and direction in furthering woodworking in Ghana. We, as did Jeffrey and his colleagues, learned this was not as

simple as it sounds. But first, some background on Jeffrey Lohr.



Abu Abdullai explains some of the challenges that woodworking in Ghana present to even the most intelligent and inspired person.

Jeff, like many of us, got his first exposure to woodworking in woodshop class in the 1960's. Jeffrey described his high school woodworking program as excellent, which means to say that it was the type of program where, if you had it in your to become a professional woodworker, this program would become the springboard as opposed to just a class to kill time and have fun. From there he went on to Millersville State College followed by a postgraduate stint in West Chester, and eventually became a shop teacher. He started his own woodworking efforts in a basement shop, moved up to a one car garage, built decks for a while when going out on his own. He graduated to a barn sized shop and, in 1988, opened his own furniture making studio. He actually has a sawmill as part of his extensive production shop.

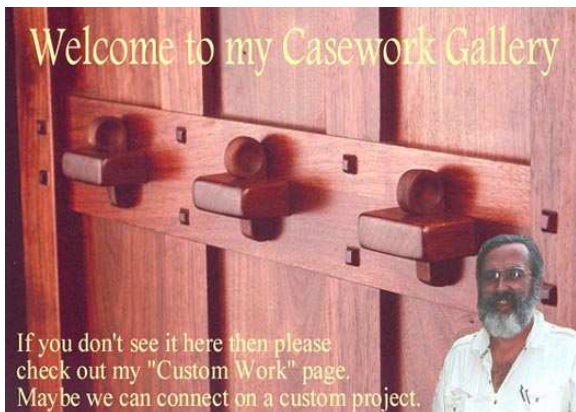


Jeffrey's current studio and School.

He is, as stated, well known for his Arts and Crafts furniture, inspired by Greene and Greene and Frank Lloyd Wright. He advised that he was doing Arts and Crafts style before it was fashionable, or, as he said "before the wave...". He moved on to free form (sort of native looking wood) style of his own. No matter what he created, he was inspired by a love of the wood itself and let his work be a showcase for the material. Making quality furniture is a painstaking process where shortcuts are not going to be part of the program, meaning that you better be able to charge proper prices for attention to detail, and the only way to do that is to have a reputation commensurate with the prices you need to charge and reputation for excellence of the work. Jeffry has apparently achieved this degree of recognition in the field.



This photo of one of Jeffry's works, from Jeffry's web site and taken by none other than Paul Anthony, is his current woodworking passion – freeform.



Jeff made his name from his approach to Arts and Crafts style furniture – photo from web site.

As part of his appreciation for passing on what has been learned, he started his own woodworking school in 2001. His desire is to ensure that each student has proper level of attention and that the syllabus is properly thought out and executed, so he has a max of 10 students in a class for a week and runs 8 of these classes a year. His teaching, for which he has become very well known, lead to his being sought out by Abubakar Abdullai, who we know as Abu. Abu and the plight of woodworkers and people in general in Ghana and countries like it were the topic of interest for this meeting.

Abu traveled many miles and stood in line at an internet café in order to communicate with Jeffry. Abu apparently came into a woodworking "business" from his father. This is not what you would think of it here. This means a small work space and some hand tools and perhaps people in the region who knew you worked wood. There was no table saw. No jointer, no planer. These folks worked for hours just to hand plane a board flat. By the time they are 40, they are physically shot. Shoulder rotator cuffs are hammered into old age due to the amount of work. So many calories are expended, most of the money made is spent on food to provide energy to work. Moreover, people are born into a situation of hopelessness. There are no careers. Nothing to aspire to. A very corrosive environment. Abu not only wanted to make a living, his calling is also to help his fellow woodworkers in his country learn how to make a livable wage in the trade as well.



Abu has not had a lot of public speaking experience in our country but did a fine job going through slides showing some of the woodworking situations in Ghana. It was moving and educational.

Abu did a fine job presenting some photos from his makeshift shop and a mission school where he volunteers.. There were pictures of a very beautiful raised panel door that was made. Totally by hand. Out of African hardwood. Amazing work. Took days.

There are other issues. Most of the wood harvested in Ghana is used in other countries. Wood is not used wisely and the country has only recently began to embrace the importance of conservation. Home building is not done in a manner that would be familiar to us. It is 2008, and homes are build of a lashed bamboo frame packed with wet clay. What, no cable TV? Oh, NO TV? No refrigerator, no indoor plumbing? You can hire a full time housekeeper for \$100 a YEAR. I thought it was bad in Thailand in 1967

when a secretary was paid \$30 a month for a 60 hour week and it was considered decent pay. This is 2008.



A web photo of one of Jeffrey's "classrooms. He has extensive courses, and many sold out. Web site information at end of article.

Abu contacted Jeffrey in early 2007, and Jeffrey decided that the best course would be to bring him to America to take his woodworking course would be very beneficial to Abu and his desire to help other woodworkers in his country. So, Abu came to America with a free ticket to Jeffrey's school. Jeffrey taught him all able the table saw, the jointer, the planer, all the tools that Abu had almost no exposure to. In a short period of time, Jeffrey came to realize that he was taking a totally incorrect approach. Public electricity is not available to everyone in Ghana. Most African woodworking shops need to rely on small generators. What would happen if you plugged your 15 amp Craftsman table saw (the most basic one around?) into a plug powered by a portable generator? Oh, yeah, a 220 volt, 50 cycle generator? Bottom line is that hand power tools is about all you can run. Virtually ALL woodworking is done by hand. Cutting logs into planks is done with chain saws. And, remember, this is Africa. Hardwoods. Very hard woods. No pine, easily worked wood. The wood not only dulls the senses of the hand tool woodworker and exhausts them, it is a killer on tools. Jeffrey asked Abu to work a 5/4 rough board into a 4/4 board. He did it, almost as perfect as any board you would push through a machine, in 90 minutes of non stop hand planning. One board. With these limitations, how does one make a living?



Miter gauge. Accurate. Duplicatable. Simple.

So, Jeffrey and his apprentice woodworkers, Rob Spiece and Eoin O'Neill, set to work. Jeffrey has had 15 apprentice woodworkers, fully paid in the past 19 years. Since Ron and Eoin were with us at the meeting, a little bio follows.:

Rob graduated with a degree in film at Temple University in 2004. Jeff originally took Rob on for his film and video credentials to help on plans I have for that but he have been truly amazed at how quickly he has come along with his woodworking training and study. Rob takes as naturally to woodworking as anyone I have had the honor to train over the course of my own career. Jeffrey is hopeful Rob will be the long term fellow at Lohr Woodworking and in fact has earned the title of Journeymen earlier this year. In addition to his woodworking training, Rob has been teaching Jeffrey quite a few things about film which is exciting for both of us. They have several woodworking video projects started and in fact have sent Abu home to Africa with no less than 6 training videos on how to create and use Mr. Jeffrey's Third World Machine system as well as videos on food preservation techniques.

Eoin O'Neill comes by way of England to America and is the latest addition to Jeffrey's staff. Eoin was a significantly accomplished guitar maker before joining the program at the studio in Schwenksville in mid 2007. His interests now more diversified to include furniture, Eoin is a welcome addition to the general studio and school program at Lohr Woodworking. Jeffrey believes it no doubt stems from his guitar building background and experience, but one thing all in the studio can count on is that work given to Eoin is executed as well as it can be and to the finest tolerance with minimal guidance from Jeffrey. I could not resist asking Eoin when he last had a Fuller Extra Special Bitter (My favorite English ale). Torture.

Back to the challenge...

If a circular saw was all that could be powered, then they would design a table saw built on a circular saw. Sort of fashioned in the same way as we put a router in a router table, They call is Mr Jeffrey's Third World table saw. And, the obvious extension to this is a table mounted router, turning this into Mr Jeffrey's Third World Woodworking System. Since Abu calls Jeff Mr. Jeffrey as a symbol of respect not uncommon in this area of the world, Jeff coined that phrase into the "system".. So, fine, you get these and build a few jigs to get things done. Think about the concept of a table saw or router jig. How does someone who has never used or been exposed to these tools even conceive crafting a job aid? And, keeping in mind the limited capacity and accuracy of the raw tools, how does one craft a large, accurate jig?



Eoin O'Neill explains the details of the combination jig – table saw fence and router fence.

Well, Jeffry and team figured that if you start Abu off with a set of these job aids, and a springboard of jigs and knowledge of how to use them, then send them back to Ghana, they can craft their own from there, the Mr Jeffry third world tool will propagate itself, and perhaps, with some new tools and new life breathed into woodworking in that area, things would begin to take off. Per Jeffry: *“When Abu has his first full compliment of Mr.J’s Third World Machines constructed soon after his return home, our goal is for him to publicly demonstrate and prove it’s effectiveness and then to solicit the help of local village Chiefs to create what we are calling Moringa Community Center. The Center will essentially be a shop cooperative open to the public from which this new system will be made available for replication –free of charge – to as many Ghanaians as possible.”*



Rob Spiece is currently one of two student apprentices here at Lohr Woodworking. He was awarded an apprenticeship in June 2006. Photo from Jeffry’s web site as the one I took was poorly exposed.

OK, I will take a time out here and interject some of my own comments, and these are thoughts that Jeffry spoke directly to, and it hit me very hard. Why doesn't Jeffry take on a kid from Appalachia? An inner city ghetto? Someone from the good old USA? Well, it is pretty simple. The world is becoming a very small place. American kids from almost any background have access to schools. Minimally decent if not excellent programs for all manner of interests either as part of the curriculum, extra curricular, or as community programs. Even poor children, given a fertile environment for the seed to grow, can get scholarships if they really want to pursue their dreams. Sometimes it is a helpful neighbor with a shop who takes time to teach. You know, some guy on a small scale with a contractors table saw, 6" jointer and maybe a cheap portable planer. A router table. Well, this guy with his little shop would be king of the trade in Ghana. Hey, Jeffry, just take up a collection and send a Unisaw. Well, where are they going to plug it in? The power is not sufficient. We are in hardship when the central A/C is broken. When the Directv cannot see the satellite during a thunderstorm and we have to pick up a book. When the cable modem is down.



A look at the router fence side of the combo jig.

It was pretty revealing when Jeff described the first time he took Abu into a Home Depot. They cannot buy wing nuts where Abu is from! Imagine Home Depot! I do not think any of us can imagine the overwhelming feeling Abu must have experienced. Frankly I wish we could be overwhelmed by something in our plug and play, disposable society. It is one of those times like when I was in the Army and a kid from the Midwest who never saw the ocean went to the beach with a bunch of us – totally overcome.



Note that the construction, while close on dimensions, is the most basic and simple. Common hardware must be used if the jig is to be duplicate. They do not even have wing nuts, so Abu is going home with some..

A planer can be made from a sled jig with a router attached to it. You have probably seen examples of this. Raised panel work is done on the saw as big raised panel bits are hard on routers and sparse machinery cannot be subject to abuse. Think of this – it costs \$390 to get a router to Ghana. A cope and stick cutter would be worth GOLD to these folks. A router with an offset fence is used for jointing, similar to some systems available here, and accurate jointing is critical as all edge jointed boards use dowels.



Jeffry referred to this as the Adam – that precise jig from which all others will be created.

In any case, there is a lot of good that can be done but for every expected hurdle, there were several unexpected hurdles, and Jeffry and his team are seeking to overcome each of them and are about there.

One other improvement area near and dear to Jeffry's heart, unrelated to woodworking, is the need for food preservation. There is the rainy season and the dry season. Food growing windows are slim, and there is no food preservation in Ghana. Jeffry's wife Linda Lohr has extended **this** outreach to include introducing cost effective food preservation / canning methods to this area already suffering from food shortages. It is really hard to imagine. No food preservation plants exist in Ghana. So, this will have benefits beyond the woodworking efforts and kudos to these folks for their out of the box look at areas to improve.

We were all impressed and sort of humbled by this whole story and effort. I will close the formal part of this writeup with the following quote from Abu taken from Jeffry's web site:

I am most grateful for the honor of study in America under the guidance of Mr. Lohr at his woodworking school. I am hopeful that Mr. Lohr's Woodworking School will teach me how to make new products and improve the quality of our existing creations so I am able come back to Ghana and share this knowledge and woodworking skills with my countrymen. There is great wisdom in the old saying: " If you give a man a fish you have fed him for one day; If you teach a man to fish, you have fed him for a life time." I want to learn to fish. .

I am hopeful to create a carpentry shop and school for woodworking in Cape Coast, Ghana. I am also hopeful that a source of funding can assist us to to continue to grow a significant woodworking program for all the people of Ghana's benefit by the establishment of such a school.

I am hopeful to help the people of Africa and for export to America. To create products distinctive of Ghana culture that would have appeal to an American marketplace.

I believe an opportunity to have American tradesman and small business men instruct me on marketing strategies based on personal experience would be a very powerful education. The start-up process of any small venture, based on woodworking and woodworking products can best be explained by others who have done it successfully. What I learn from others can help me do the same for myself.

Poverty is at the root of many social problems in all cultures. To enable young people and adults to gather skills-on both an educational and personal level—can do much to change a life. To provide a place of learning a tangible skill, and offer an alternative to the bleak future that stems from lack of viable opportunities for self improvement would be a great contribution to the society of my country. I understand the future can be different than the present if we have a different

vision. I have a different vision, and I can make my community a better place to live and work if I succeed in my efforts.

Abubakar Abdullahi, Cape Coast, Ghana.

***** More about Jeffry Lohr *****

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Contact Jeffry Lohr by telephone (610) 287-7802
Please try to call between the hours of 7:00am - 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time - Monday through Saturday.

Web Site - <http://www.jdlohrwood.com>

Also see: <http://moringacomunity.org/>

J. D. Lohr Woodworking Inc

242 N. Limerick Rd.
Schwenksville, PA 19473

I mentioned that Jeffry teaches woodworking – his Woodworking 101 course looks like this:

Practical Woodworking Course Syllabus:

4 hour course taught on consecutive weekdays or on weekends. Classes limited to 10 people. Prices on the web site do not include materials. Quite a list of topics – 48 hours must be packed!

- 1-Understanding the nature of wood.
- 2-Standard trade nomenclature of wood as a raw material.
- 3-Working from a plan.
- 4-Demystifying a Bill of Materials.
- 5-Stock selection, how to pick & where to buy hardwood. How to work with defects.
- 6-Layout, dividing project into components.
- 7-Rough milling. (minimizing waste by learning the practical rules of production).
- 8-Component grouping for quick milling.
- 9-Rough stock lamination.
- 10-SQUARING, (probably the simplest most misunderstood process in the world of amateur woodworking, the basic steps that should never be deviated from).
- 11-Rip and Crosscut blade selection and sharpening. The physics of tool design.
- 12-Jointing and milling with 100% accuracy.
- 13-Joinery design. The does and don'ts of long-lived joinery techniques.
- 14-Dowel and biscuit joinery.
- 15- Advanced Router techniques. Tongue and groove joinery.
- 17-Breadboard end table top construction.
- 18-Mortise and tenon joinery.
- 19-Tapering and shaping.
- 20-Gluing and clamping. (All types of glues).
- 21-Sanding, What to do by hand, what to do by machine, which abrasives and machines to buy.

22-Project assembly. What to glue, how much glue & how to remove glue.

23-Final grain raising.

24-Project finishing. Hand applied techniques for stains, fillers, sealers, varnish, polyurethane, shellac, and oil finishes. Both rag and brush applications.

25-Rubbing out a finish to give it that professional quality feel and appearance.

26-A power tool & stationary equipment buyers guide for purchasing the best equipment that will give you the biggest bang for your buck.



I mentioned that the members kicked in donations. There is over \$300 there, and a couple of generous members tossed in \$50 bills! In addition, steering committee members present elected to donate \$100 to the cause in addition to the speaker fee. Nice going, folks.

Drag and Brag



If we fail to root for Will, he roots for himself! Another striking and nicely finished work.



What a fine, fine job Ken and Judy did. Even I ate. It was a lot of work and these folks go beyond the call of duty every month. Thank you both. You are good people who care about your fellow members.

Steering Committee notes

I was at Musikfest with my wife and was not there! I heard it was a wild evening.

Newsletter offer – Want to write it?

I am tired. Anybody have a burning desire to write and publish this thing? Let me know.

And the Woodcraft winner is...



Jerry “cedar and pine blanket chest” Kaplan!

Wood Specials

SHADY LANE TREE FARM

Louise & Mike Peters
5220 Shimerville Road
Emmaus, PA
610 965-5612 Please call

FLEETWOOD LUMBER & FLOORING

BILL BURKERT
27 Rapp Rd.
Fleetwood, PA
610 944-8364 Please call
Member discount 5%

Bailey Wood Products, Inc.

441 Mountain Rd.
RD#2 Box 38
Kempton, PA
610 756-6827

Woodcraft

Pkwy Shopping Ctr.
1534 Lehigh St.
Allentown, Pa.,18103

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2008 Meeting Calendar:

Month	Topic	Speaker
August 19th	BILL GRUMBINE TURNS!	Mr. Grumbine!
September 16th	FESTOOL DEMO	FESTOOL – arranged by Woodcraft
October 21st	CONTEST TIME!	
November 18th	FREUD DEMO!	Freud tools –arranged by Woodcraft

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