



From The Shop



The newsletter of the Lehigh Valley Woodworker's Guild

Issue 06.2007

Upcoming Meeting Information

Next Meeting: June 19th, 2007 (3rd Tuesday!)

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

Speakers and topics:

- Festool – new tool demo by the gang from Woodcraft!
- Joe Deevy presents Colonial Williamsburg
- Take 10 – Members Q&A session

May Meeting Highlights – Wood Burning. With Frank Rauscher



Frank Rauscher showing one of his works at the opening of our May meeting.

Frank Rauscher gave the guild its first woodburning presentation ever. He brought in many very interesting items he has done, and some of this work was very interesting indeed. Frank had been a carver and got into woodburning about 7 – 8 years ago. He teaches both carving and woodburning, and also sells supplied for these hobbies, many of which he brought with him.

Frank started out by saying that you can become an artist without being an artist. Said another way, in many cases, beautiful and successful woodburning can be a result of photos or patterned traced onto wood and then burned in. Frank advised that woodburning is a

step by step process, and, once understood, can be done by almost anyone.

Frank's wood of preference is basswood. Bass has a very clean look. He sells some he gets from Michigan. Pine can be tricky as it has pockets of pitch and can get smoky. Poplar is OK to use, and Oak can be used as well, although Oak has many rays in its grain, which cause a ribbing effect that can either add or detract from the work depending on the piece. You can also burn on bark.

Heat control is the most important thing to a woodburner. With proper heat control, woodburning can almost have the same effect as monochrome painting. Heat control seems to be common to both woodburning and stained glass, a hobby I have. When applying solder to a piece of work, too much heat causes the solder to melt into the seam. Not enough heat causes it to have a rough look. Just right causes it to form a nice bead. With stained glass, that is always what you want. With woodburning, variable heat control enables different effects.



Some interesting and nicely done works demonstrated different techniques. This one I believe shows that the bird's breast was painted in Titanium white and then burning done over that.

Woodburning sounds much the same in a respect. Too much heat will cause a dark and perhaps wide line, too little will cause perhaps a too fine line that is light in color. You want to adjust the heat for when you WANT those effects. Sometimes you want a dark and wide burn, other times a fine light burn.

Woodburning can be done with a variety of tools. As in other crafts, the better the tool the better the effect, but

Frank advised that woodburning can be done with almost any woodburning pen. The better ones make it easier, and heat controllers are important in maintaining a constant temperature to the tip of the pen.



An owl burned on bark. This one attracted a lot of attention and this photo hardly does it justice.

Most commercially available woodburning blanks, such as basswood, come pre-sanded on one side. Frank likes to finish sand to 300 – 400 grit and then tack rag the blank. For pattern transfer, he uses a graphite tracing paper under the pattern – this is less messy than carbon paper and you do not want to be messing with cleanup of the piece after you have finished it. So you put the graphite paper on the blank, the pattern on top of that, then trace.

When tracing, make sure you position the image properly on the wood blank. This is much like properly composing a photo before snapping the shutter.



On this one, Frank used the image for the cabin and traced it onto the wood and added other elements freehand. You can also trace from different sources onto one blank.

He uses a red ball point pen for tracing so you can tell where you have started and what has been traced. Go

lightly when tracing – you do not want to have to burn out the pattern lines. You can erase bad burns by lightly shaving with a razor or Xacto. Do not try to sand them out – you will not be able to sand without damaging more of the work.

You need to learn a lot about how to achieve different effects. For animal fur, you use many very light short strokes. For foliage, a ball tip pen works well, as for writing. The best sources of information are on the many books available on this subject, and also the Internet.



What can you say about an American Eagle? Another fine piece. This one has no paint fill but still has impact.



Some more pieces with painted highlights.

On the subject of books, Frank explained to me prior to the meeting that when he starts speaking on a subject of passion, he loses track of time. After the meeting, he advised that he spent too much time speaking on how woodburners get ideas, as in some excellent books he

brought, and the demo portion of his presentation started too late for some folks.. When he did get into the hands on, however, the ease with which he worked with the pens made it seem like child's play. I am sure his experience made it look simple, but his hands on demonstration made woodburning look like something almost anyone CAN do and something I myself would like to try. Although it was late, several folks were still quite interested.



The photo and the work. This woodburning had paint added and looks like a painting, but the woodburning adds a depth that makes this work more interesting.

And to be clear, woodworking is very much a hands on process. It is a process, with many differing tools and techniques that need to be learned and mastered. Books will only take you so far. Some of us rely on plans, but many of us design our own work. Woodburning is the same to a point, then differs. Woodburning relies on few tools. It relies on some processes. It is more an art than woodworking, but does not require a person to be an artist so much as it requires a person to be creative. The books are a pretty effective source of ideas for creativity and technique. They are also a source of patterns that can be used directly.

Frank was inspired to start woodburning by meeting Cheryl Dow. Her books, according to Frank, are among the best for beginners. This seems to be the general opinion of many on the net about this author, as I have done a little investigating for myself since the meeting. Frank went through many books as a source of ideas, suggesting you can take a central object from a picture and then put whatever background you like into the work. Sort of like a log cabin piece he had – the cabin was part of a picture and the surroundings you can either freehand or get from another picture and trace it on.

You can burn on turnings to accent them, as in burning a pattern on the side of a turned bowl. You can paint the burned piece if you like, but Frank cautioned to go VERY lightly on the work, and do not wet the work too much. You can always add more but taking away is tough. Frank also advised that the wood burn marks often control the flow of paint, which can help with

borders from one color to the next. Frank uses and sells acrylics for painting on wood.



I think this critter was at my bird feeder stealing sunflower seeds. Here it stole an acorn.



This setup is an Optima with an Optima pen, a one piece pen.

With respect to equipment, there are two types of common pens and many pen tips. There are single unit pens and there is a system whereby the pen handle is a separate unit and you just buy different pen tips. Both schemes work. I think the Colwood system has replaceable tips and they also make heat controllers that can control one or two pens. Optima is another popular vendor that makes one piece pens and similar heat controllers. There are many, many types of pens to pick from, but, as Frank advised, most work can be done with only a couple of pen types; a knife point, a ball point, and a shaver type.

The difference is cost is, by and large, a factor of heat management. More expensive heat controllers keep voltage (which creates heat) more stable and therefore, burning results will be more consistent and you are not constantly adjusting the rheostat.



The pens at the top and bottom are Optima one piece pens and the thing in between them is a Colmar pen handle. Typically, you buy the burner base, a cord and a pen or a pen handle and tips.



With some style tips, the effect is almost like painting.

When holding pens, do not hold them like a pen. The heat rises and your hand will get hot real fast. Hold the pen off to the side. In order to maintain the quality of your image on knife point tips, they must be sharp or have well defined edges (depending on the tip itself). This is accomplished by using about a 400 or higher grit sandpaper to dress the tips.



Frank was doing some light strokes as in a feather. Note that he is not holding his hand over the pen, but to the side so the heat does not rise and become uncomfortable.

As I stated, in looking at Frank working during the hands on woodburning demo, I was impressed by the ease at which he demonstrated the different types of woodburning effects. And, while you do need some space and storage for your supplies, the whole operations takes place on a table top. I would not expect a hobbyist to be able to do this work as well as a professional, but you never know how fast someone would take to the hobby.

I recalled my sister did some fine work with one of those hobby store woodburning kits many years ago and she has not done anything since in the way of woodburning. She cannot do a lot of physical work any more as she has some mobility issues as a result of diabetes, and as such she stays home a lot. I was thinking – what a great outlet for her very creative nature by getting her the proper tools and supplies. I think she could spend many fulfilling hours doing this hobby again, but perhaps using proper tools, she would find it more pleasurable and rewarding. As we all know, there is a great difference in working with cheap tools and working with decent quality tools. I think I will be buying her some woodburning tools and some blanks. It seems that this hobby is one that lends itself well to a lot of people, and does not require great space.

Frank gives lessons and also sells supplies for carving and woodburning. Give him a call or e-mail if interested.

Contact info:

Web Address: www.ecarve.com

Rauscher Bird Carvings

1361 Karen Lane

Radnor, PA 19087 Phone 610.964.0642

Email (Sales) rauscher@ecarve.com

**Need short stories: Workshop Near misses!
Safety lessons.**

We are woodworkers. (I think so..). Woodworking is dangerous. I was going to write that woodworking “can be” dangerous, but I rephrased. We work with power tools of all kinds, sharp objects, and we work in an environment that has airborne particles and solvent fumes, and have sometimes toxic / caustic, or acidic substances touch our skin too. Even if the machines do not bite us, they can toss wood and other objects at us.

I know I have had a couple of shop accidents, but luckily none of them has had a permanent physical effect. They have had a permanent mental effect – I can never approach a jointer again without a certain amount of fear.

We are looking for short stories on shop accidents and lessons learned. And, as the Kaizen philosophy tells us, continuous improvement is a key success factor, so

how have you improved your work process to avoid accidents?

The Steering committee thinks that this conversation needs to take place because, as a guild, our charter is not only to teach new techniques, but also to ensure that our membership approaches their hobby with proper perspective on safety. Never get too comfortable when working in the shop. Send me your shop safety gap experiences and let's share our lessons learned.

Drag and Brag



YES – DRAG AND BRAG! Judy Muth MADE many of the refreshments for the last meeting. That is an example of a guild member really stepping up! I should also mention that Judy and Ken did not accept any reimbursement for the goodies. If they want to be our refreshment providers, they are going to get paid back, but Thanks so much for the special touch of home made goods!



Bill Hylton brought in this great mini Hoosier cabinet. This was designed after a piece built by his grandfather and handed down through 5 generations. Built this for his sister to hand down through her family, as his grandchildren got the original.

Bill Hylton told a great tale that was a liittle hard to follow but I gather that he and his sister used to play with this little home made Hoosier like cabinet that was

built by his grandfather. Not sure if his sister had it for a while or not but the bottom line is that it wound up passing through Bill to his grandkids. His sister apparently really wanted to have it, so Bill, being the fine guy he is, built an .most exact copy for her This is a neat little piece of work that also has the attention to detail you would not expect in what is essentially a kid's piece of play furniture. But that was how they built kids play furniture years ago and Bill put first class craftsmanship into this one, right down to selection of the hardware. Bill mentioned that his sister is thrilled that he has enabled both of them to have a piece to hand down.

I hear she is still mad at him. After she see's this, I think she will be pleased, unless her first name is Paris... (Get it? Paris Hylton? Oh – Hilton? Never mind.... She can't fit this in her jail cell anyhow...).

This mini hoosier will be featured in an upcoming issue of woodworkers journal. You saw it first here!



Stephen Kirk made this great European saw horse. Note that this saw horse can be used by any woodworkers, not just Europeans.



Yes, just a saw horse, but look at the nice joinery! Attention to detail need not be reserved for just the finer pieces.



WILL SCHMIDT STIKES AGAIN!

If I know what it was, I would tell you. In fact, if Will know what it was, he would tell you!! And we learned that Ken Muth is giving him some wood to work on. Nice of you Ken. With his love of roots, I am glad Will does not have a friend who is a dentist....

And the Woodcraft winner is...



**Bond. James Bond.
Or is it ---
Clause. James Clause.**

Steering Committee Meeting Notes

The treasurers report was presented by andy and accepted, and the accounts are in good shape. The newsletter is under control. Russ will be getting the stuff on Taunton books from Dan. Russ advised that we may have some donations of exotic woods from a cabinetmaker down in the Sellersville area. More to come on that subject. Russ also lined up a speaker for

August who is the inventor of a new jig that does dovetails of all kinds and some other things too. He will make some sawdust! Allen advised we have a couple of pieces of furniture for Waveland, Miss., and that is about it. He also mentioned we need to crank it up on the woodworking contest for October. It will essentially be the same as last year. We were going to try to present a woodworking problem to solve (like use a single sheet of plywood..) thing, but wanted to keep it fun. Probably categories like:

- Furniture
- Utility (Shop stuff)
- Artistic (Carving, woodburning, some nice roots from Will Schmidt..)
- Turning
- Accessories
- Professional
- Ironing boards (for Ron Wiley)

Lou Supina thanked Dan Manturi for mixing up the power supply plugs on the speaker system and frying them, cause it never worked right anyway, he got it fixed under warranty, and now it works better. What a guy!

Lou is also going to look into getting someone (a doctor) from Lehigh Valley Hospital to come in and give a talk on danger in the shop, from tools, to dust, to toxins..... Good idea.

Lou Supina will be making up an official letterhead for Guild correspondence, so folks will not confuse us with impostors. Guess after 12 years, we ought to have a letterhead.

That is about it.

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.
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Note!! See specification sheet for blocks at the end of the newsletter!!

2007 Meeting Calendar:

Month	Topic	Speaker
June 19th	FESTOOL – new tool! Colonial Williamsburg –	Vendor presentation Joe Deevy
July 17th	Collection of member presentations – shop tours, etc.	
August 21st	Probable demo of a dovetailing jig by vendor.	
September 18th	Carving	Frank Rauscher
October 16th	Annual Woodworking contest	Anyone and everyone
November 20 th	Vacancy!	
December 18th	Annual Holiday Party	Members and families

NEXT MEETING – Tuesday, June 19th, Starting at 7:30, sharp. Allow time to arrive and be seated before start time.

Location: Lehigh Co. Senior Center

Topics:

- Festool demo by the gang from Woodcraft!
- Joe Deevy with a Colonial Williamsburg presentation
- Take Ten – 10 minute Q&A problem solver session