



From The Shop



The newsletter of the Lehigh Valley Woodworker's Guild

Issue 10.2007

Next Meeting: October 16th, 2007 (3rd Tuesday!)

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

Speakers and topics:

- Annual Guild Woodworking contest
- BRING IN THE BLOCKS PLEASE!

**September Meeting Highlights
Frank Rauscher - Carving**



Kingfisher as powercarved and woodburned by Frank Rauscher.

Well, we are operating on total recall. Do not ask me what I did with 6 pages of notes from Frank Rauscher's excellent presentation of power carving, but they are gone and likely among paperwork I had discarded inadvertently. So much for cleaning up! But I have a good pictorial record of the meeting, and should be able to put together a reasonable accounting of the interesting presentation Frank provided. Frank had the guild members gather round in a circle while he took us through the steps of power carving.

Carving – conjures up different thoughts for different people. Intricate, detail, time consuming, artistry. Well, there are different schools of thought and different techniques. We saw an excellent presentation by Phil

Alcock from NJ a few months ago that was pure hand tool cutting. Frank Rauscher's approach is geared toward the hobbyist – using power carving devices, adding some detail with the carver or, if you prefer, some detail via woodburning, and getting some beautiful and fine results.



Frank had everyone gather round and demonstrated techniques in a close up enough manner so all could see what he was doing. He was still going at 10:00, and folks were still listening...

Frank brought a few examples of his work – a Kingfisher, a Cardinal, and a rainbow trout. Apparently Frank had not a lot of experience doing fish and this was a new project for him, and looked to be an excellent first attempt. When describing the fish and birds, Frank explained that you want to create an effect of life and moving, and so the birds' heads are turned in a lifelike way and not straight on, and the fish is curved as though swimming. These little touches add a bit of difficulty to the work, but the finished product clearly makes the difference.

Frank starts with a piece of wood, typically basswood but with power carving you are not quite as restricted as a beginner as you are with a knife. Different woods have different grain characteristics, and this can make knife carving difficult - if the wood is hard - or tricky - when the grain takes a knife in a direction other than

one you wanted to go in..-, but in power carving, you let the tool essentially grind the wood off the piece.



This is a typical pattern, the kingfisher. Note that there is a top view, a side view, and, in this case, detail for the underside of the tail.



The side is traced onto the blank and that profile is cut on a band saw. Not that on this piece there is a reference arrow showing the direction that the wood grain should go in.



This is the top view and you can pretty clearly see the way this pattern would be cut on the band saw.



This photo shows the series of steps that a blank takes (right to left) until it becomes a bird.



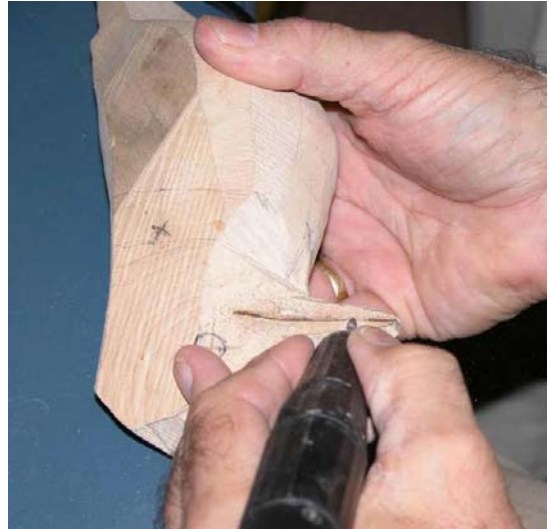
Opposite view show the detail added by a combination of power carving and woodburning. The woodburned model almost looks fine just like that, but the painted one was really spectacular.

Frank starts out with a pattern and a band saw. After tracing some lines off the piece and onto the blank, you hack off the major hunks of wood with a band saw. After sawing the top and side views, you knock off the corners. When you get experienced, you can likely take it down pretty close, but for starters, you should be conservative.

After taking off the bigger pieces with the band saw, Frank went to the power grinders. He uses two types – one that does the heavy stock removal and has on the end what is essentially a power rasp, and the other which is a fine detail high speed device similar to a dentist's drill. This one moves as high as 35,000 rpm, and is used after the blank takes the shape of a bird.



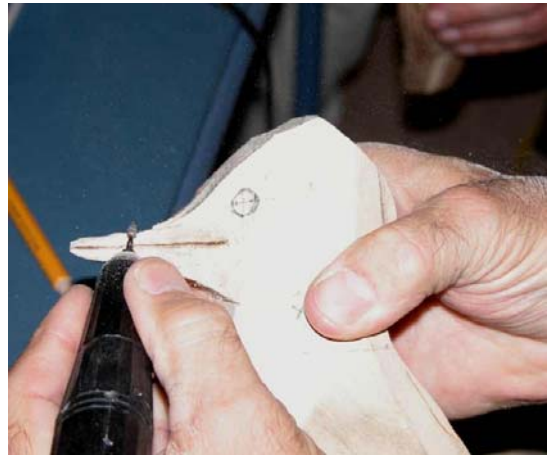
Rounding out the blank with the heavy grinder. This one removes stock very fast. Note – unlike knife carving, you will make a lot of very fine sawdust with this method and should use both dust collection and breathing masks.



Using the fine grinder with a “FLAME” bit (has a very sharp point), he makes the slight bevel on the top and bottom of the beak.



This is starting to take shape. Frank starts with the shoulder and then moves to the breast side of the blank.



Now is the time to shape this beak.



Moving to the woodburner, frank cranks up the heat and makes the line in the beak of the bird.



This part was pretty interesting – he used the fine grinder to cut the line where the top of the beak meets the face.



Back to work with the heavy artillery working on the underside of the bird.

It is pretty easy to see how the blend of the heavy grinder for horsing off stock, the fine detail grinder for making the figure come to life, and finally the woodburning. I was surprised to learn that much of the detail in the kingfisher was not carved in but burned in and then painted with a paint that allowed the burn to show through. You actually had to touch it to see that the detail was not carved in.



You can see the detail on the beak that was done earlier on the right. He now goes to work removing stock on the top of the head. Note that Frank carefully puts layout lines on the work and follows them. He advised that a lot of people are careless with placement of the eyes and that will really take away from the work if they are not aligned properly.



Here is a view after the wing "shoulder" was carved in with the detail grinder. The area under the wing is cut in fairly deeply.



The fine detail grinder is used to outline the feathers on the breast. A scalloped design, that must be done randomly for realism.



Here is an example of what this looks like.



Here we see where the flame but was used on the back feathers and the burning enhanced the depth.



The beak gets layers of crazy glue. Applied one after the other, it creates a hard shell like surface that is pretty realistic. Note that while much of the detail is carved in, a lot is burned and then the burn shows through the paint. Here's looking at you, kid!



This is a really nice piece and as Frank said, the shape you create will add realism to the work.



My wife loves her Cardinals and this one does have more detail carved into the feathers, although some burning was likely done as well. This is a winter cardinal, and the sort of puff up in winter. In fact, the usually sit so close to the branch, Frank carved a channel in the bottom of the bird to enhance the effect of the bird hunkering down to stay warm.

There are books available not only for knife carving but also for power carving. Frank advised that when you buy decent equipment from the start, the tools last a very long time. The bits for the fine detailer and the large one last for "years". The grinders are not inexpensive, but these are really all you need. The fine detailer runs from \$285 (35,000 rpm) to \$315 (45,000 rpm). Footpedals are available for starting and stopping. The heavy duty power grinder runs a little less, like \$200 - \$250.

Bits for the detail grinder run about \$9.00 each and Frank advised that the ruby ones work fine. There are diamond ones available for a little more but Frank uses the Ruby and the flame and the dovetail are the ones he uses most frequently. The bits for the larger grinder are a little more but you do not need as many.

Woodburning equipment was displayed a couple of months ago, but you can get a good start for about \$110 for a burner and a couple of pens. I think I may have related in that meeting review that my sister enjoyed woodburning from one of the basic kits and the pen that looks like a soldering iron. I bought her the Colwood Detailer burner and a couple of Optima pens, tracing paper and a book, along with a few practice blanks. I picked them up from Frank at the last meeting and brought them over to her. She has really picked this up again, and advised that the new equipment is such a pleasure to use. She has given up her drivers license recently due to illness, and the woodburning hobby has added a lot to her life. Carving is much the same – a hobby that does not require a lot of space or tools or wood. The fact that you are using grinders in this case make it a lot safer than using a knife and also a lot faster. Yes, the knife is more traditional, but it depends on your goal and philosophy. You can make hand cut dovetails or use a router. They both have their place.

Frank kept going till about 10:00 and then had a lot of packing up to do. Did not get on the road back to King of Prussia till perhaps 10:40. Andy and I know – we helped him pack! Appreciate the extra time and interesting presentation. Frank sells tools and materials, and teaches classes on woodburning and carving.

He can be reached as follows:

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610-964-0642

Drag and Brag



My favorite creative soul in the guild, Will Schmidt, brought in these really unusual letter openers. I cannot stress how impressive it is to be able to "see" something in a piece of root wood. These are pretty special and again Will impressed us with the choice of materials, the finish, and the grace of his work.



This is MY toolbox and my husband made it for me. Now if someone will help me carry it...



Nicely finished, nice hardware, and hand cut dovetails make this piece special.



Nice work on the dovetails, Steve Kirk!

From WOODCENTRAL, where Steve wrote: I've always wanted to make a good toolbox for my wife. So, over the past few weeks I got busy and put something together. Well, I originally wanted a portable toolbox, but this one is heavy without tools in it. It's all 1/2" red oak. I hand dovetailed the case and the tray inside. This is the first time I tried hand dovetails and I didn't do too bad. Some gaps, but I don't think it'll fall apart. General Finishes stain and 3 coats of poly brushed on. I don't like the trunk hinges on the back - I don't think they are strong enough to support the weight of the lid. I think I'll add chains to the sides to act as a stop. The rest of the brass hardware and the handle look great on it, though.



Bill Hylton's bargain basement router table. Bill cracks up at the prices of router tables and the overkill involved in buying or making one. This one costs less than \$200 – or was it less than \$100 - and can do anything you need it to do. We are not building nuclear cruise missiles, we are building a router table.

A router table on the cheap? Bill Hylton brought this one in to our September meeting. Split fence, double dust collection (at the bit and in the case), MDF top, bit storage.



As you can see, the MDF is well supported and will not sag. The router is well encapsulated so the dust collection from above and below will be very effective. Hinged top makes removing the router a snap.

Bill had his newest book on hand - Bill Hylton's Ultimate Guide to the Router Table - and sold a couple. Well, maybe more than a couple. I GOT MINE! He also had an updated version of the classic "Woodworking with the Router". I think everyone has a copy of the original in their library. The updated version may be worth a look too.

And the Woodcraft winner is...



ME! Dan Manturi! Finally. I cannot pick on Bob Lindenmuth any more. Had to take my own photo. Darn, teeth look like fangs! Nice tie, though.

Woodworking Contest at October Meeting!

BRING IN YOUR STUFF!

Steering Committee Meeting Notes

- **Blocks. BRING IN YOUR BLOCKS THIS MEETING, FOLKS! PLEASE REMEMBER THEM! THANKS!**
- We are looking for folks who can donate some prizes. If you know anyone, send them our way.
- Talking at meetings – **we have ONE meeting.** If you want to have a side conversation and it happens to need to take place between 7:30

and 9:30 on the 3rd Tuesday of the month, take it outside or into the hallway.

- Katrina – Allen Powell still accepting donations – he will get the stuff down there one way or the other.
- For refreshments we will be having pumpkin whoopee pies and football cookies. As long as they have nothing to do with the Philadelphia Eagles, PLEASE!



Our chief cook, refreshment maker, party person speaks out at the meeting!

Local Lumber Company on This OLD HOUSE!

Grothouse Lumber Company, located at 6035 Memorial Rd, Germansville, PA 18053 was visited by Norm Abram and This Old House. The episode will air this fall (Now?). Apparently they were just there recently. Check your TV listings or look at the web site for This Old House.

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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2007- 2008 Meeting Calendar:

Month	Topic	Speaker
October 16th	Annual Woodworking contest	Anyone and everyone
November 20 th	Scott Shimandle from OSHA and Dr. Basil Dolphin.from LVH Healthworks. Scott will speak about machine safety and Dr. Dolphin will speak about the negative effects of wood dust and vapor from finishing chemicals.	
December 18th	Annual Holiday Party	Members and families
January 2008	We have a couple of ideas...	
February 2008	Jesada Cabinet Template routing	Ken / Judy Muth
March	Chair caning / shaker tape	Helen Donmoyer
Aril	Possible Legacy tool demo.	
May	Tentative – Dust collection bags and canisters – Vendor	

NEXT MEETING – Tuesday, October 16th, Starting at 7:30, sharp. Allow time to arrive and be seated before start time.

Location: Lehigh Co. Senior Center

Topics:

- Woodworking contest
- BRING YOUR BLOCKS IN!