Don Williams, Senior Furniture Conservator at the Nation’s Premier Cultural and Museum Complex in Washington DC lectures at the Dakota County Technical College. See March meeting.
As I write this column in early March, large snowflakes are coming down. It has been a good winter for woodworking, skiing or just leaving town to be in a warmer climate. Fortunately I have been able to do all three. I also had an opportunity to read a fascinating book titled “How We Decide” by Jonah Lerher. The author applies recent findings in neuroscience to learning and decision making in a highly readable format. I’ve always had an interest in brain research and knew there were applications to woodworking (just use your brain, Dick). I was particularly interested in his discussion of how our brains learn from mistakes or errors. The more mistakes we make the more opportunities we have to learn. In fact, the best computer programs for playing chess were designed to learn from their errors. The more errors these software programs made, the better they became. I should apply these programs to my never ending list of mistakes.

The author gives numerous examples of highly skilled individuals who make a point of scrutinizing and reflecting on their errors or imperfections. These are the same moments which often lead to profanity in the shop. You never stop making those darn mistakes, but reflecting on those experiences allows you to become a better woodworker. I like that. It is good for me to put a positive spin on my “learning opportunities”. So as you look over your work at the end of the day, savor the opportunity to learn from your errors knowing it will make you a better woodworker. Our heroes - James Krenov, Sam Maloof, Michael Fortune and others like them, must have made an uncountable number of mistakes to become such talented furniture builders. See you at the Northern Woods Show.
Deadline for Northern Woods Entry Extended through April 6, 2009

That’s right, you now have a second chance to get your entry completed for the Northern Woods Show. We are hoping to get a few more of you to submit your work to the show April 23 - 26. You can still find the form on the website www.mnwwg.org. If you have any questions call 612-242-0203. If you have never entered a piece, this is your year.

February Meeting – John M. Zola
Spray Finishing Techniques and Equipment
Article by Bob Rocknem

Show and tell at the beginning of the February meeting included several handmade saws by Mike Siemsen. These handmade saws were made completely from scratch by Mike. Talk about a labor of love. We all know Mike from his woodworking school in Chisago City. For more information check out the website at schoolofwood.com.

Our presenter for the February meeting was John Zoia from 3M. John has 32 year experience in the automotive painting and finishing business. John admitted his woodworking experience was limited to a woodworking merit badge. As far as the spray equipment, it is the same for finishing furniture as it is for auto business. John is now working for 3M as sales representative in the adhesive, paint, and solvent divisions. He has a large western United States territory to promote its PPS Paint Preparation System. With the acquisition of Acuspray, 3M now provides a method for individual and industrial paint spraying with many improvements and advantages over commonly used HVLP systems. This PPS is used by boat builders, cabinet shops, military, and aero-space system in addition to automotive shops. Any large shop can experience significant savings. For instance, General Dynamics is saving $184,000 a year painting tanks using PPS.

The kit contains several sized cups, measuring inserts, disposable inner liners, sealing rings and covers with filters. Thus the paint can be mixed and shaken without using a separate container. With an adapter supplied with the kit, the cup can be attached to most spray guns easily and with minimal mess.
Air now can be evacuated resulting in a closed system and allowing spraying in any direction, even upside down. The liner retracts as the paint is used. When finished, air is allowed in, the cup detached from the gun, and the liner thrown away. No solvent is needed to clean the cup and only about 3 ounces solvent is used for the gun vs. 16 the usual way.

It is easy to see that clean-up takes much less time and waste is minimized. Cost and time saving can be enormous when there are many operators. Also, air pollution and fire hazard are decreased. The cost of a “load” is about $2.00 while the typical savings in paint, solvent, and hazardous waste disposal is $3.01. That is nearly a dollar savings per cup of finishing material, even for us small shop woodworkers. A box of 25 liners, plugs, and filters runs about $55. Hard cups cost between $12 and $18 depending on the size of the cup. Rockler sells a starter kits for a lot less money. John will supply the adapter for your spray gun for free.

John showed and demonstrated several different types of spray guns including gravity feed, siphons, and pressure feeds. The HVLP gun can be expensive, around $400. The PPS kits are not expensive, you can get started for around $45.

For more information, pamphlets with excellent illustrations, and orders:
John M. Zoia, sales development manager
PPS Adjacent Markets
3M Industrial and Transportation Business
3M Center
St. Paul, MN 55144-1000
In the Beginning

The following article is being reprinted with the permission of “Fine Woodworking”. It first appeared in the November/December 1982 issue of the magazine. The article describes the founding of the Minnesota Woodworkers Guild more than twenty six years ago. We have come a long way from a membership of 22 and annual dues of $50 for non-voting members. That’s right, $50, twenty six years ago and $40 today. The Minnesota Woodworks Guild is a bargain no matter how you look at it. Hope you enjoy what follows.
SURVIVING IN MINNESOTA

There’s a deep suspicion in the Midwest about anything trendy from the East or West coasts. In this landscape of grain elevators and cornfields, people believe that only when something takes hold on Main Street does it enter reality and history. Quality woodworking is beginning to take hold here at the center of the continent.

It’s been a long time arriving. Woodworkers here in Minnesota still have limited educational opportunities and few local heroes of national prominence. What they do have now is access to a place to show and sell their work, through the Archetypes furniture gallery, and they have a way to get together, through the Minnesota Woodworkers Guild.

Keith and Linda Pollari opened their gallery in June, at 528 Selby Ave. in St. Paul, next door to their custom furniture and millwork shop. Teke Klimer, a furnituremaker from Minneapolis, formed the Guild about two years ago in an effort to organize about a half-dozen shop owners into a marketing group. Today it comprises 22 members who each pay yearly dues of $50 (nonvoting) or $100 (voting). It has retained its professional focus, although it now also includes a lay member category. The group meets once a month for either business or panel discussion.

The Guild continues to debate the question of just how exclusive membership should be. The idea behind exclusivity is to impose a seal of approval, so the public knows that only woodworkers who have met rigorous standards may display the Guild emblem. Membership applications are subject to scrutiny by a jury of three members, who evaluate not in the smoky realm of design, but in terms of woodworking technique and a proper understanding of materials. This policy has succeeded in making membership somewhat prestigious, not to be sought prematurely, but it has also caused some hard feelings. The founders had hoped that craftsmen rejected by the jury would still join, and perhaps learn, but it hasn’t worked out that way.

The problem of marketing has also been divisive, although all the members agree on the need for some group effort. The Guild’s founders, generally owners of established shops, hoped for a vigorous program that would help the public see woodworking and furniture design as a serious profession. But the smaller shops have balked. John Scherber of the Crocus Hill Woodshop described the dilemma of the smaller shops this way: “There are guys in the Guild who make just $5,000 a year, so no wonder they’re scared to spend a buck on promotion. But unless they find a way, they’re always going to make $5,000 a year.” President Ted Gordon is among the fence-sitters on the issue. He would prefer to continue to test the market at the Archetypes gallery, through local craft and home improvement shows, and with a brochure the Guild is producing called “Working with a Woodworker.”

The Guild and Archetypes don’t yet represent the sort of grand acceptance of woodworking that people here imagine has occurred on the coasts. But these two forums do mean that woodworkers and consumers are taking notice of themselves and of each other. Despite struggles about weighty issues of craft standards and marketing, the basis of the Guild remains good fellowship—it’s a way for woodworkers to get together, to help each other survive. When it’s wintertime in Minnesota, survival is what it’s all about.

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Announcement: Sawstop Beta Test

Sawstop will be providing the Woodcraft in Bloomington their new Professional Cabinet Saw for beta testing in order gather end-user feedback. The saw should arrive in the store in early April. Woodcraft would like to partner with the MN Woodworkers Guild and make the saw available to the membership to demo and provide comments back to Sawstop. If interested, please call the store at 952-884-3634 to arrange a time to stop by.

Timothy Roseth
Manager, Woodcraft #306
9125 Lyndale Avenue South
Bloomington, MN
(952)884-3634
Don Williams gave two presentations at the March Woodworkers Guild meeting. The first was on shellac, and the second was marquetry and veneer work.

Don is originally from Owatonna, but has lived in the mid-Atlantic states for the past 30 years. Before finishing college he worked as a scratch and dent repairman for a high-end furniture and cabinet maker in Palm Beach, Florida. Don said, “you knew it was an exclusive place when you realize that it had an unlisted phone number.” He graduated from the University of Delaware with two degrees, one of which is art history. Don has worked for the Smithsonian for the past 25 years. For an in-depth biography see http://www.si.edu/mci/downloads/media_information/dcwbiography.pdf

Shellac

People often find shellac and French polishing intimidating, but it does not have to be. According to Don, once you develop good habits and use the proper tools and materials, working with shellac is “easy as rocket science.”

Don stressed the importance of establishing good habits, the first of which is to always use a quality shellac mix. Shellac will age; you need to always use a fresh mix. Get into the habit of mixing your own shellac; it allows you to learn the material, and to choose your own quality and concentration of solution.

Don uses a wipe on hand-rubbed application method. He prefers this over the more traditional and rigorous French-polishing method.

Attention to detail in surface preparation is also critical. Don referenced Roubo’s classic work and illustrations. (1769: André Jacob Roubo, L’Art du Menuisier Paris, 1769-74. Three volumes, over 300 plates) Both Roubo’s original publication and a limited reprint of this work are trading in the collector’s market at collector’s prices.

Today we typically use power-machined surfaces that are smoothed with sand paper. The historic methods of surface preparation included hand scraping and burnishing. Common historic burnishing materials included wooden blocks, ivory, horsetail, corn-stalks, and marsh reeds.

People often think that shellac was the only finish used before the twentieth century. This is not true. Tree resins and tree saps were refined and dissolved in oils, creating two-part varnishes. Don shared a picture of the refining process—there were a dozen vats, each with its own masonry chimney flue. Today this picture is often interpreted as an effort to protect and create a more comfortable environment for the workers. This is not true. Each one had an isolated chimney in an effort to keep a run-away process or fire in one processing vat from spreading to others. It was done to protect the product.

An important thing to remember is that shellac is a natural product. It is affected by the climate, the amount of rain, sun, the local temperature, and the length of the season. Some years are distinctly better than others.
Shellac is one of the few zoological or agricultural products we use in finishing today. Shellac is an excretion from the lac beetle, which is indigenous to Indonesia. The female lac beetle alights on fresh shoots of trees and uses her proboscis to drill into the tender tree shoot for nutrients. After laying eggs on the fresh shoot, she covers the eggs with an excreta to protect them. Shellac is made from this egg cover.

Historically the harvesting of the shellac casings and the processing was done by hand. This is a very labor intensive process involving several discrete steps. Mechanization of this process is more common today, but there is resurgence in the hand processing of shellac, so that there are a large variety of qualities of shellac available today. Once you get familiar with shellac, you will be able to tell if it was processed by hand or by machine. The mechanized product will be filtered more fully and will be more uniform in thickness and color.

Shellac is commonly marketed in a dry state in three typical forms: seed, button, or flakes.

The branches laden with shellac eggs are harvested, and the eggs are removed and winnowed from the debris. At this stage the shellac is often marketed as seed or stick shellac. The seed shellac is small globular pellets and the least processed product.

Button processing involves, dissolving, heating, and drying. Linen is used to filter out impurities. The shellac that filters through the linen is collected and formed into buttons.

Shellac flakes are created by heating the buttons, and expanding them much like pizza dough. A worker called the “taffy puller” stretches a single button into a sheet that may be as large as seven feet across. As these sheets cool and harden they are broken into the flakes.

Bleached shellac and wax-free shellacs are obtained by further processing. Bleached shellac is obtained by dissolving the lac in aqueous sodium carbonate, followed by bleaching with sodium hypochlorite. Precipitation of the bleached lac with dilute sulfuric acid solution, and drying; wax-free bleached shellac is prepared by further treatment whereby the wax is removed by filtration. Typically the bleached shellac is more unstable and will have a shorter shelf life. Zinsor has developed a stabilizer (approximately 5 years ago) and has used it to create canned or prepared shellac in solution.

The natural wax in shellac acts as an internal plasticizer, creating a less brittle finish. The waxy shellac will protect against humidity better than de-waxed shellac. The waxy shellac is more historically accurate for restoration and maintenance of antique pieces.

The wax-free shellac protects against liquid water spills better than the waxy shellac. The wax-free will exhibit less shrinkage, and is sometimes chosen as a sealer to bond to other finish materials.
Dry shellac is prepared for application by mixing with alcohol to derive the concentration that we desire. Shellac concentrations are measured in pound ‘cut’ ratios. These ratios are described in other sources. Most documentation found on this process today will recommend the use of denatured alcohol as the shellac solvent. Don never uses denatured shellac.

Denatured shellac is an alcohol which has added poisons or impurities to make it non-potable (for legal reasons). The additives in denatured alcohol are not well regulated, and will shorten the shelf life of the mixed shellac.

Don has experimented with pharmaceutical alcohols, but is currently using wood-grain alcohol from his local liquor store. He can purchase 190 proof wood-grain alcohols on the east coast. In Minnesota, the liquor stores do not carry 190 proof; you may find 130 to 160 proof. Someone in the audience recommend going to Wisconsin, which does have 190 proof in their liquor stores.

The big advantage to selecting the correct alcohol is an extended shelf life of the mixed shellac. Shellac mixed with denatured alcohol will have a shelf life of a few months. Don has had shellac mixtures with quality alcohol solvents, last many years.

Shellac has a number of uses beyond furniture finishing. The apples, or cucumbers you buy at the grocery store are covered with a waxy coating, a shellac product. The capsules and time release medications from your pharmacy are shellac products. Shellac is widely utilized in cosmetics.

On the next day, Don held forth in much greater detail on a range of topics. Twenty lucky Guild members were able to attend the “Spring Seminar” to learn even more on the fascinating subject.

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**Newsletter Editor**

This issue is the 36th Guild Newsletter I’ve had the privilege and pleasure of putting together. These three years have gone by in a flash. That is how you know you’re having fun. As much fun as this has been, it is time for some new blood and I am pleased to announce that Jerry Beutel will be taking over the newsletter. Jerry has been a member of the Guild for about three years. I’m sure you have seen him at the meetings. We will work on the next couple of issues together. After that I’ll be a reporter from time to time just like David and Bob. Please thank Jerry when you see him.

It has been a pleasure.

Bob Bridigum, Editor of Northern Woods
**DISCOUNT SUPPLIERS**

The following suppliers offer special discounts to Guild members. To receive a discount you must be a member in good standing and show the merchant your current membership card.

**Abrasives Resources**
900 Lund Blvd #400, Anoka, MN (763) 586-9595 or (800) 814-7358
Sandpaper, coated abrasives, rolls, clearance items - 20% discount.

**Art Betterley Co.**
11160 Central Ave NE (Hwy. 65) Blaine (763) 755-3425
Various discounts depending on product.

**Eide Saw Service**
Dave Heidtke <daveh@eidesaw.com> 1329 Tyler St. NE (Behind Youngblood Lbr.) Minneapolis 612-789-3288
Saw blades, router bits, planer knives, and band saw blades welded to length. 10% discount on all items, sharpening included.

**Forest Products Supply**
2650 Hwy 61, Maplewood, MN 55109 (651) 770-2834. 10% discount on all lumber purchases.
www.forestproductssupply.com

**Gardner Hardware**

**Hirshfield/Lathrop Decorating Centers**
20+ metro locations, Rochester, St. Cloud. Discounts on all items including stains, varnishes, application tools, etc. Must show membership card. Ask for MN Woodworkers Guild account.
www.hirshfields.com

**Holdahl Company**
1925 Annapolis Lane, Plymouth (612) 333-7111 or (800) 777-8992. Commercial cabinetmaker’s supplier but will sell at wholesale to Guild members - router bits, saw blades, abrasives, tools for laminating, laminate, decorative and functional hardware.

**Nob Hill Decorative Hardware**
3027 Holmes Avenue South, Minneapolis (612) 824-7424.
Decorative hardware for doors, cabinets and bathrooms. 10% discount, 15% on orders over $1000.
www.nobhillhardware.com

**Rockler Woodworking**
Minneapolis, 3025 Lyndale Ave S (612) 822-3338; Burnsville, 2020 W Cty Rd 42 (922) 892-7999; Maplewood, 1935 Beam Ave (651) 773-5285; Minnetonka, 12995 Ridgedale Drive (952) 542-0111
10% discount on all regularly priced items except power tools.
www.rockler.com

**Savitt Brothers**
1515 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis (612) 871-1155. Everything in paints & stains, accessory items. Contractor discount to net price.

**Swanson Hardware**
7501 W 27th St, St. Louis Park (952) 925-4083. Cabinet shop supplies, hinges, handles - Wholesale to Guild members.
www.swansonhardwareco.com

**Valspar Paint**
Plymouth, 2984 Niagara Lane (763) 557-1361; St. Paul, 106 Water St W (651) 222-8435; 20% discount to Guild members.
www.valspar.com

**Woodcraft**
9125 Lyndale Ave S, Bloomington (952) 884-3634. 10% on all items except power tools.
www.woodcraft.com

**Woodcarvers Store & School**
3056 Excelsior Blvd, Minneapolis (612) 927-7491. Books, tools, classes, supplies. 10% discount on all items (except electrics 5%).
www.woodcarversstore.com

**Youngblood Lumber Co.**
1335 Central Ave., Minneapolis (612) 789-3521, or (800) 933-1335. Wholesale prices to Guild members.
www.youngbloodlumber.com

**New Members**

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APR 2009 / MAY 2009
NORTHERN WOODS
Materials
4/4 WHITE BIRCH S2S (to 13/16") SL one edge @ $2.50 a b/f. These can be purchased one or multiple boards at a time-most all are 8' lengths- averaging 4 b/f each and 4/4 CLEAR ALDER (not the notty, rustic variety) S2S (to 13/16") SL one edge @ $3.00 a b/f. These can be purchased one or multiple boards at a time-most all are 8' lengths- averaging 4 b/f each.

Black Walnut, suitable for small craft projects. Trunk stems resulting from improving growing forest. Blanks up-to 8' in length, 1" – 4" diameters. Wood is highly dense as a result of slow growth.

Black locust lumber for sale. Originally purchased about 4 years ago in Wisconsin green and has been air dried since. Black locust is hard, durable, and is very very rot resistant, hence common in boat construction. Nice grain and coloring. I can email pics of some furniture made from the locust that I’ve done. The wood is available for pick up at zip code 55407. The size varies: approximately 80 bf S3S 1x6-1x8 - 9' long (S3S was milled to 1" actual), 375 bf rough, 1x4 to 1x8 7-9' long (rough varies from 1-1/8" to 1-1/4" in some boards), 800 bf 1x6 to 2x8 7-9' long (again, nominal sizes). Can be purchased in any quantity.

Prices:
S3S 4/4 $2.75 per bf
rough 4/4 $2.50 per bf
rough 6/4 $3.00 per bf
80+ BF, $2.00 per bf
All, $2,300.

email me (tan@nguyenarchitects.com) or call 612.644.4369.

Tools
Tormek Super Grind 2000
Used once to sharpen 1 chisel. Just like new. VIDEO/DVD/Book included along with Scissors Jig, Knife Jig, Diamond Truing Tool and Stone Grader. $200 Call Jim at 612-788-4242 (located in NE Mpls) or Jim_Alice_Roth@Hotmail.com

New (in box) Grizzly Bandsaw. G0555X
14" Extreme Series Bandsaw, $550 and Grizzly G0452Z 6" X 46" Jointer w/ Spiral Cutterhead, $600. Bert @ 760 625-4450 cell or gusmarbert@gmail.com

Restored trade and collector tools from early 1800’s to 1950’s. Large assortment of quality planes, chisels, saws and hand tools. Grey Wolf Antiques will provide current guild members with a 15% discount on all tools. You must present your membership card. Located at Midtown Antique Mall, 301 South Main Street, Stillwater, MN or Email: gwa@lighthousebay.us

Personal & Services
Share a large fully equipped woodworking shop with 2 or 3 other woodworkers. Conveniently located in the former Singer building at the corner of University and Hampden St. Shop has total of 1820 ft.² with 1000 ft in common space and 18’x20’ personal space in separate rooms. Office space with kitchen facilities included.

Stationary tools include:
• 10” Delta Unisaw with 50” Biesemeyer fence
• Rockler router table with JessEm router lift - - your bits
• 12” Band saw
• 10” Delta radial arm saw
• 10” Milwaukee miter box saw with table
• 12.5” Delta surface planer
• 6” jointer with 4’ bed
• 12” Delta drill press
• Kreg pocket hole jig setup

Price (utilities included) $230 month to month rental. Contact Dave Skogstrom at 612-822-1937

Plane soles milled flat. price ranges from $12 for a block plane to $40 for a #8. Sides can be milled square to the sole for $15-$20. Contact Chuck Pitschka at 952-935-0660, or by e-mail at cpitschka@mnrr.com.

Spring and summer weekend workshop retreats with Mark Laub. Once again this summer Mark will be hosting weekend retreats at his studio on the wooded banks of the Rum River. Topics will include original furniture design, traditional 18th century carving, advanced joinery, and, another session of last summer’s very popular Parlor Trick retreat.

All retreats include lunch and fireside dinner and beverages. Contact Mark Laub for more information. boardromstudios@gmail.com or 612.210.7793

Mike Siemsen’s School of Woodworking - We have a great line up of classes for 2009! Not only will you get to work with Mike but also some fantastic visiting instructors like Garrett Hack, Adam Cherubini, Mary May, and Tom Schrunk. Classes are held in my shop on a quiet rural setting 35 miles north of the Twin Cities. The shop is air conditioned. Visit my website at www.schoolofwood.com for more information.

Phone: 651-257-9166
email: mike@schoolofwood.com

Advertising in The Classifieds is provided to members of the Minnesota Woodworkers Guild free of charge. The ads placed herein should be for goods or services that are of general interest to the crafts people who make up the membership of the guild. Ads for services will run until cancelled. Ads for tools and materials for sale will run for one issue unless renewed. For submissions, renewals and to cancel an ad, please contact Bob Bridigum, e-mail RLBridigum@aol.com or snail mail to 4755 Laura Lane, Shoreview, MN. 5126
Mark Your Calendars

April 23 - 26th - Northern Woods Show at Southdale Shopping Center

May 19th DEAN JANSA 18th Century Furniture Techniques
Dean Jansa is an 18th century period furniture maker. Dean’s only power tool is a 14 inch bandsaw, all of his other tools are 18th century tools, he doesn’t even use “modern” cast iron planes, or sandpaper. Meet Dean and see his tools and how he uses them to create wonderful pieces of furniture.

Location: Mike Siemsen’s School of Woodworking 9912 Green Lake Trail, Chisago City, MN 651-257-9166 http://schoolofwood.com/
Directions: Take I35 north to Hwy. 8 (exit 132) and go east for 4.5 miles to Co Rd 23/Green Lake Trail. Turn right and go 1.4 miles. The School of Woodworking will be on your left.

June 16th Navy Island Plywood
Navy Island is a commercial producer of high quality veneers for architectural work. We have been trying to get into this amazing facility for two years, don’t miss it.

Location: 275 Marie Ave. E., St. Paul, MN 55118
Directions: Take I35E to Hwy 110, exit east. Go to Mendota Rd. turn left. Go east to Roberts St. S. turn left. Go north to Marie Ave. turn right. Stay on Marie Ave to facility.

Normal program time:
Time: Show & Tell at 7:00 p.m; Program starts at 7:15 p.m.

Check the guild website www.minnesotawoodworkersguild.com for updates.