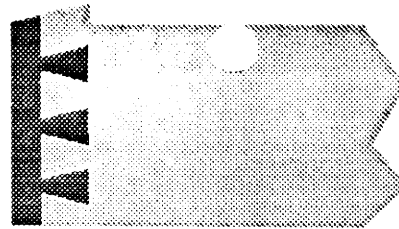


Newsletter



Western
Pennsylvania
Woodworkers

News and Views from the Western Pennsylvania Woodworkers, Inc.

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MEETING NOTICE

DATE: Saturday September 13, 2003
TIME: 10:00AM, coffee and donuts at 9:30AM
PLACE: James Wood Works on the third floor of the R. J. Casey Industrial Park at Columbus & Preble Avenues (kitty-corner to UPS on Beaver Avenue) on Pittsburgh's North Side.
SUBJECT: Raised Panel Doors

THIS MEETING

Saturday September 13, 2003: Our friends at Woodcraft (The Pointe, at Robinson Towne Center) will be presenting a program on how to use a router table to make raised panel doors. Their demonstration will include the tools and techniques necessary to make the coped rail and stile joints, as well as methods to raise panels using both vertical and horizontal panel-raising bits. Because of time constraints, they will not cover the preparatory steps of milling components flat and true (absolutely vital to making quality doors), so if you're not sure how to do this it would be good to brush up before the meeting.

INSIDE WOODWORKING

In a recent Post Gazette there was an article datelined Indiana County with the headline: ACCIDENT KILLS INMATE.

An inmate at a state prison was killed in an accident in the prison carpenter shop.

State police reported yesterday that Robert Decory, 37, was struck in the head by a large piece of wood that broke loose from a lathe he was operating at the State Correctional Institution at Pinegrove.

The accident occurred at 1:50 p.m. Decory was flown to Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh where he died.

Decory was serving 3 to 6 years for theft by deception.

Ed. note: From the nature of the offence and the prison location it appears that Decory was doing his time in a "country club" prison for white collar offenders. He

avoided the shives of Woods Run only to fall victim to an accident in the hobby shop. At least he had had his lunch first.

SAWDUST

Now that some of you have Osage orange wood to work with, here is some information that should be useful.

Yellow, isn't it? Or it was! Most of the wood changes from yellow to orange shades to a milk chocolate brown and weathers to a beautiful silver gray with black highlights that is reminiscent of an Ansel Adams photograph depending on the wood's exposure to sunlight. This change will vary from a few weeks to a few months. The only way to stop this progression of color change is to keep the wood in a dark room. (Not much of an alternative). Items made of Osage orange kept from the weather will mellow to a most pleasing rich brown color.

Osage orange wood is hard, dense, heavy, cross grained and seldom comes in clear knot free boards. Many of those familiar with the wood consider it superior to black locust in contact with the ground. Some people who have worked with both woods compare it to white elm. The herringbone pattern of the closed grained wood reflects light in an iridescent manner. The wood is shock resistant, flexible and very strong; just the qualities that make it an ideal material for archery bows. Because the many variations in the grain in any piece, the stability of the wood is inconsistent. That fact should always be kept in mind during the construction of any item.

Working with Osage orange can be quite difficult. I prefer to use four quarter planks and make outdoor furniture, picnic tables, benches, etc. When planing, remove 1/16" or less in any one pass to prevent tears and gouges. Your sharpest blades will be most essential for best results. Routing can be difficult in the extreme. I prefer to work edges with a rasp or wood file. The wood glues well and screws should all have carefully sized pilot holes. You will notice how dusty the wood is when working it, so wear a mask at all times. Allergic reactions are possible, but rare. Turning is also difficult, so remove only a little wood at a time using your sharpest tools. The results from a carefully turned piece of Osage orange are nothing short of

spectacular. Expose the turnings to the weather for two years, sanding every six months will produce a unique work of art with a varying iridescence from the grain with every turn of the hand that holds it.

-- Felix Sylvius

GOOD STUFF

Windows -- the kind you look out of. When one must spend one's working life chained to a desk, it is a relief to look out from time to time at the rest of the world, if it's only at a gas station or a parking lot. This came to mind, recently, while I was reading the menu in a restaurant. They specialized in veal, and for many years veal was one of my favorite foods. I quit after seeing a picture in the Wall Street Journal. To many people who don't read it, the WSJ is far right wing, bigoted and prejudiced, and so it is, as far as the editorials and columnists go, but the reporting is usually straight up. If they cover a Nike sneaker factory in Indonesia, and one of the nine year old little girls who operate the machines get whipped for spoiling a shoe, that's the way it will be reported.

So the WSJ had an article on the veal business. The tenderness of veal is achieved by confining a calf in a stall and watering and feeding him and shoveling out his by-products until he is big enough to be led out to slaughter. He never leaves that stall. The picture that got to me was of a large dark low-roofed shed with a half-grown calf tethered in his stall in the foreground, surrounded by hundreds of others. I'm reconciled to the idea that we raise animals to kill and eat them, but the idea of a calf spending his entire life in that stall, never walking on the grass, never seeing the sky or getting rained on was too much for me. So I swore off veal. Not really swore off. I just stopped eating it.

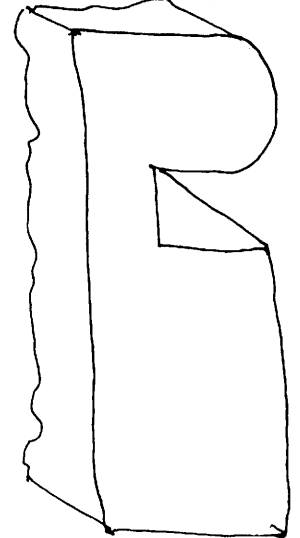
Somewhere in that same time frame I visited a Westinghouse office out near the Airport. It was the early days of cubicles, and I had not seen them before. The large windowless room was open and unobstructed except for the shoulder-high metal partitions, and looked as big as two football fields. With the addition of some means to muck out the stalls, you could have

used it to raise veal. I was fortunate during my working life not to have lived under such conditions. Early in my career I worked in moderate sized bull pens with windows along the edges, and later in a loft above a factory. The bull pen there had small stalls next to the windows, and by then I was fortunate enough to qualify for one. My company was nothing if not thrifty, and the partitions put up by the maintenance department were of rough two by fours and the chip board then used to sheath houses.

HANDRAILS

It is fashionable these days to use a slab of polished wood about the size of a two-by-six for a handrail. The stairs up to James Woodworking has them. They look good, the only trouble is that as hand rails, they stink. You can't get a good grip on them. There must be a lot of old geezers who have wound up at the bottom of a flight of stairs after their fingers slipped off the polished wood. In a lot of places you now see a round metal rail screwed onto the front of decorative wooden rail, probably at the suggestion of the legal department after a couple of lawsuits.

The Yale-New Haven Hospital, where I recently had my wife in for a tune-up, has solved the problem. They have routed a deep groove into the back of the decorative rail so that you have something to hold onto.



FOR SALE

Shopsmith shaper table -- with two adjustable fence/tables for shaping flush or just rounding over, etc. Also a vac insert on top of the table for the 1 1/2" vac hose (or 1 1/2" adapter for a 1/2" hose) It has an on-off switch on the one leg with a locking key, to prevent the children from turning it on, plus it has 2 miter feather boards that go into the miter gage slot. It keeps the board tight while shaping edge. My cost is \$75.00. Includes instruction booklet.

Woodsmith Magazine -- 78 issues, #33 thru #110. Includes six brown Woodsmith binders. #100.00 takes all. For the shaper table and magazines call Rick Astorino at 412 781-6818.