

Northwest Woodworkers Association

THE SAWDUST NEWS



December 2017

An association for woodworkers of all skill levels to share their common interest

The Next Meeting

Date: Thursday, January 25, 2018 at 6:30 PM

**Location: Rockler Woodworking - Northgate
832 NE Northgate Way
Seattle, WA 98125**

Program Highlight: Multipurpose Portable Work Table

John Gonder will be giving a presentation about the design, fabrication and applications of a useful tool for crowded shops. He will show an interesting array of accessory inserts to adapt the work table to a wide variety of woodworking tasks. Sounds like a great source of new ideas and concepts! Don't miss it!

December 2017 Meeting Highlights

Newsletter Photos by Herb Stoops

The December 2017 meeting of the Northwest Woodworkers Association was held on Thursday, December 7, 2017 at Woodcraft Supply. Sixteen members and two guests were present.

We want to express our appreciation to Ron and Michelle Hall and the Woodcraft staff for providing a wonderful venue for this meeting. We really appreciate your long-standing support of the Association.



Show 'N' Tell



Dan Cordwell showed us some photos of a kitchen cabinet he recently made for his home. This finely crafted cabinet was designed with some unique features, including Baltic Birch drawers with Maple fronts, inset drawer pulls, and box jointed corners reinforced with dowels.

Dan noted that his design was intended to accommodate heavy loads, such as canned goods. To that end, he provided a centered under drawer ball bearing slide in addition to the ball bearing slides on the sides of the drawers.



As a special feature, he designed the cabinet with hidden storage spaces under the bottom drawer, accessible after removing the drawer and the underlying panels. Except for the finger holes in the center divider, there is no visible evidence that there is any hidden space underneath the drawers. Clever idea, **Dan!**

Allen McCall displayed a beautiful jewelry box made from some exquisitely figured Black Walnut, further enhanced by a contrasting, book-matched, live edge Juniper medallion centered on the top panel. The bold grain pattern of the Juniper, also used for the box legs, contrasted nicely with the warm brown tones of the Walnut.



Note that the box lid has a unique construction, in that the lid corner joints are half lap joints in very thin material – excellent examples of fine craftsmanship, **Allen!**



Tom Howorth gave us a slide presentation of the finely crafted workbench he has been working on for some time. He noted that the Maple material used for the bench came from a tree he felled in his yard a couple of years ago. He had the tree milled into 2-inch thick slabs which has been stacked and stickered in his yard under cover to air dry for the last four years.



Tom noted that the workbench is built to last – having a 3-inch laminated top with 7-inch aprons! He included a double handle, tandem chain driven end vise on each end of the bench, as well as a quick release side vise on the front. What a well designed and crafted project! It should provide you years of enjoyable woodworking pleasure. Great job, **Tom**!!



Cory Cross also gave us a slide show of the progress on his workbench. He noted that he made the top from 2 x 4 material which he milled from 2 x 10's. To suit his available work space, **Cory** said he designed the bench with short legs, but even then, the bench weighed over 100 lbs.

To minimize construction costs, he elected to use 3/4-inch pipe clamps for his bench vises. However, he discovered that his original choice of galvanized pipe turned out to be unsatisfactory, as the clamping clutch plates tend to dig into the soft galvanized surface preventing smooth operation of the clamps. To solve the problem, he replaced the galvanized pipe with standard black pipe.

He also showed us some slides of a boat construction project he has in work.

Christmas Gifts



As in the past several years, our **Association Gift-meister Herb Stoops** and his bevy of Christmas elves were again busily making Christmas gifts to give out at this month's meeting! In keeping with his usual generous holiday giving spirit, **Herb** made **beam compasses** as gifts to this year's meeting attendees! In addition, he also brought along some of the useful **bow sanders** he made as Christmas gifts for last year's Christmas meeting!



These hardwood **beam compasses** were nicely made, with brass thumb screws, and a brass insert in the top of the beam to prevent damage to the top of the beam. Most of us have found that the old trick of drawing a circle with a string and a pencil is a very frustrating experience, with extremely questionable results. These nicely crafted tools will be a real addition to our tool collections, **Herb**. Thanks, so much, for your hard work and generosity – we will all enjoy using these unique hand-crafted tools. And those of us who received a **bow sander** last year have found them to be a useful tool for a variety of applications. Thanks again!

Program Highlight – **Marquetry**

It was our pleasure to welcome a former **NWWA Association** member, **Dennis Harrison**, as our guest program presenter. **Dennis** is a long time Marquetry expert, having worked at the craft for more than 50 years!



So, what is Marquetry, anyway?

The **American Marquetry Society** provides this definition:

“Marquetry is the art of creating decorative designs and pictures by skillfully utilizing the grain, figure and colors of thin veneers and sometimes other materials such as shell or ivory.”

Although Marquetry is a very old art form, dating from at least the 16th century, the craft appears to be dying out, especially in this country. **Dennis** noted that in 1980 there were about 1200 marquetarians in the US. Today, he says that there are 276 and declining. He asks the question, “Will there be any marquetarians in 2025?”

In introducing his topic, **Dennis** noted that there is some confusion about the differences between **marquetry** and **inlaying**. In his opinion, the two terms can be used synonymously. However, it is interesting to note that other folks seem to make the distinction based upon how the substrate is processed – an **inlay** being the term used for a veneered object being inserted into a prepared recess in a solid wood substrate, as opposed to **marquetry** as a veneered picture layer which is applied to the surface of a substrate. The difference between the two applications is substantially unique – the former being considered by some as woodcrafting and the latter artistry! That said, there could be an overlap of the two techniques.

Dennis described the most commonly used Marquetry techniques and the advantages and shortcomings of each. He noted that a very few highly skilled artists use a scroll saw to prepare the marquetry backgrounds and inserted pieces, employing a stack of veneer layers and cutting them all at the same time. However, he noted that one of the major drawbacks of this method is the relatively large saw kerf which must be filled with epoxy as the picture is assembled, making very visible joint lines, which can be considered a negative feature in some cases.

Dennis says he favors two of the alternate methods – the choice being related to the actual shape and size of the material being cut. His favored methods for cutting the veneer are 1) using a fret saw with its 0.005” thick, 72 TPI (teeth/inch) blade, which minimizes the kerf width and 2) using a medical scalpel, because its thin, super sharp blade produces an almost invisible kerf. Both methods require a high skill level and a great deal of patience. However, he notes that with practice and the proper techniques most people can learn this art form.

Interestingly, a Marquetry picture is built upside down! The picture is assembled with the good or show face of the background veneer layer on the top. The individual pieces of veneer that form the picture are cut and inserted into matching holes in the background layer. Strips of thin paper veneer tape, coated with a water-soluble glue, are used to hold the individual pieces of veneer in place. When completely assembled, the face or show side of a Marquetry picture may be mostly covered with veneer tape.



According to **Dennis**, the very best quality and consistency of veneers are made in France. For his Marquetry pictures, he uses 3/4” industrial grade, high density particle board as a substrate. This product is flat, smooth, and impervious to water. After gluing the veneer picture to the substrate, he uses a damp sponge with warm water to dissolve the veneer tape glue on the face side of the Marquetry picture. After drying, he sands the veneer face lightly with 320 grit sandpaper, using a flat sanding block, to level the surface. The sanded panel receives a final protective finish of Danish oil.

Dennis noted that one problem that he faces whenever he displays his Marquetry pictures is that viewers can't seem to resist touching the pictures – not realizing that by doing so, they may likely be soiling the picture with the moisture and oils from their skin! He notes that most people realize that you should not rub the surface of an oil painting for the same reason, but they can't seem to resist rubbing the veneered Marquetry pictures! In that light, he brought along a



Marquetry panel with a note that *touching that panel was permissible*.

By its nature, Marquetry is a labor-intensive craft. **Dennis** noted that on average, 50-60% of the time is spent developing the pattern and background, 25% of the time doing the actual cutting and fitting, with the remaining 15-25% of the time spent on the finishing.

For those of you who are interested in more information about Marquetry, there are a number of YouTube videos available online. In addition, there are several articles on the subject, such as this one: <http://www.americanmarquetrysociety.com/pdf/course2002.pdf> which is well illustrated and contains detailed instructions about various Marquetry methods.

To illustrate some of the wide variety of Marquetry pictures, **Dennis** brought along several he has created. As can be seen, many of his pictures have an Asian theme. Some of them have won awards in juried art shows locally and around the country.





Thanks, **Dennis** for sharing this wonderful, informative presentation about this ancient art form!

Note from the Editor



I hope that each of you had a wonderful holiday season, enjoying the time spent with friends and family, delicious holiday eats, and maybe even some new tools left under the tree..... 😊

This has been a great year for the **Northwest Woodworkers Association**. We have enjoyed some wonderful meetings and presentations to challenge us and increase our woodworking knowledge. We have been encouraged by the addition of several new members. We are especially thankful for the increased proactivity of the new members and their willingness to participate in the meetings, share their ideas, and volunteer for **Association** leadership positions.

But we also appreciate the support of all of our members who share this common interest and share your skills, knowledge and experience at the meetings and in presentations. I am always amazed at the wide variety of resources available within our **Association** and the diversity of skills and experience. It is indeed a blessing for each of us to be a part of such a group.

January 2018 will begin with the **Association** being led by a new **Steering Committee!** There will be more information about that in the **January 2018 Newsletter**. Be ready to welcome these new leaders and give them your support.

So as this Year 2017 draws to a close, thanks to all of you for your contributions to the **NWWA**. I wish you and yours a Happy, Healthy, and Prosperous New Year!

Happy and Safe Woodworking,

Paul

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We appreciate the generous support provided by our NWWA sponsors, from providing member discounts on purchased items to providing state of the art venues for us to conduct our monthly meetings. Thank you, Sponsors!

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We encourage our members to contact any of the above individuals with questions, comments, or items that may be of interest to the membership.

In addition, please visit our website: <http://www.nwoodworkers.org>