Northwest Woodworkers Association

THE SAWDUST NEWS

June 2015 http://www.nwwoodworkers.org

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

The Next Meeting

Note that all meetings have been cancelled for the Summer months

Date: **Thursday, October 29, 2015, 6:30 PM**
Location: **Rockler Woodworking - Northgate**
832 NE Northgate Way
Seattle, WA 98125
Program Highlight: ***Box Making – A Member-to-Member Skill Sharing***
This will be an opportunity to share *your* experiences making boxes. Bring along any boxes you have made, even if they have been shown before – and any jigs or fixtures used. If possible, bring along a thumb drive with photos to illustrate your box projects. This is a great opportunity for all of us to learn new woodworking techniques and methods for this fun project.

June 2015 Meeting Highlights

Newsletter Photos by S. Wilson
Meeting Notes by Chris Yee

The **June 2015** meeting of the **Northwest Woodworkers Association** was held on **Thursday, June 25, 2015** at **Woodcraft** with 6 members and 3 guests present.

We want to express our appreciation to **Ron and Michelle Hall** and staff for providing a wonderful venue for this meeting. We have really appreciated your long standing support.

Upcoming Events

As noted above, there will be no meetings during the Summer months. The Steering Committee and NWWA staff wish you and your families a wonderful, refreshing, and safe Summer vacation season. Hope to see you in the Fall rarin' to go.....!!

October 2015 Meeting – The **October** meeting will be held at **Rockler - Northgate** on ***Thursday, October 29, 2015***. This meeting will be a member-to-member sharing of our experiences making boxes. Please plan to bring your boxes, even if they have been shown before, as well as any jigs and fixtures used, and photos or other information you may have on a thumb drive. Help make this a wonderful sharing of methods and techniques you have discovered during your woodworking journeys.

Steering Committee Report - Important

As a result of the record low attendance at the **June 25** meeting, in which we had only ***one*** member present, other than the **SC** and staff, an emergency meeting of the **Steering Committee (SC)** was held on **June 30, 2015** to discuss the situation and consider revisions to our Summer/Fall meeting schedule.

We reviewed our member attendance/participation records for the past three years and noted that our attendance is typically significantly less during the Summer at both of our meeting venues, **Rockler – Northgate** and **Woodcraft**. We understand that this is the family vacation time of year, kids are out of school, and there are many outdoor activities competing for our time, energy, and resources. ***Consequently, the SC decided to suspend all NWWA meetings until October 2015***. That should allow sufficient time for the membership to return home from vacations, family reunions, etc, and most activities to return to normal.

However, at the meeting, we also entered into a ***very serious discussion*** related to the much larger issue of ***overall declining meeting attendance at both venues***. Our basic concerns revolved around the amount of time, energy, and resources expended by the five of us **SC** members, the supporting staff at the meetings, and most of all those members who take the time to prepare good, worthwhile, woodworking presentations and end up giving them to about ***five*** members who are attending and who are neither **SC** members nor supporting staff. We do not think this situation is fair to those who are active contributors to the meetings, and it may account for our members' unwillingness to give presentations and be more proactive. We also believe that this low attendance is unfair to our hosts, who provide the meeting venues at no cost to us, and who frequently extend their store hours to accommodate our meeting.

In our view, this chronic, ongoing situation, which is very real, is ***not acceptable***!

And these discussions lead us to a much more basic question:

Has the NWWA, in its present form, outlived its usefulness?

We recognize that in today's world, there are a multitude of opportunities and resources now available for obtaining information and instruction related to woodworking. Local sources, such as the Pratt Art Institute, South Seattle Community College, and others offer classes. The internet offers a multitude of woodworking forums, online classes, seminars, tutorials, YouTube® videos, magazine articles, books, videos, etc. covering just about any woodworking subject you can imagine. Many of these are available for free or for a modest charge and can be viewed from the comfort of your living room without having to fight a snarl of traffic across the city to attend a woodworking meeting.

In the coming months, ***prior to the October meeting***, the **SC** will be addressing this issue and considering a number of options, including **eliminating one of our two venues, meeting on a bi-monthly schedule, eliminating all meetings, and others**.

Make no mistake; we will be making decisions which will affect the future of the NWWA!!

The NWWA is *not* a clique or Good Ole Boys (and Girls) Club – long time and more recent members have an equal opportunity to be heard and have their ideas thoughtfully considered. Therefore, we request *your input* to help us address this declining attendance/participation problem and make the best decisions for the Association.

We are at a loss to solve this problem, so please *email* at least one of our SC members with your ideas and suggestions for improvement. We will forward your responses on to the rest of the SC members for consideration. The more communications we receive from you, the better decisions we will be able to make.

The SC contact email addresses are noted below:

Bill Bond	**williamcbond@comcast.net**
Chris Green	**chrisandrenegreen@gmail.com**
Allen McCall	**allen.mccll@gmail.com**
Herb Stoops	**hcstoops@comcast.net**
Paul Stoops	**pmstoops@comcast.net**

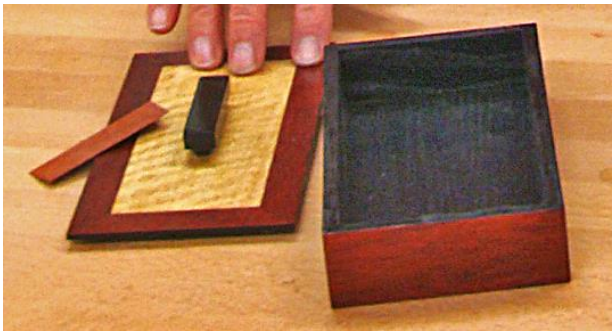
This is *your* organization! If you wish it to continue, now is the time to step up and help us with your constructive comments and suggestions.

We need your wisdom and guidance. Please help!

Veneering Show 'N' Tell

We were treated to very informative presentations of veneered projects by **Allen McCall**, **Chris Green**, and **Herb Stoops,** using some of the hardwood veneers donated to the **Association** and distributed at the **Veneer Giveaway** during the **December, 2014** meeting. Working with veneers is a new woodworking adventure for most of us, so it was especially interesting to hear their experiences (and frustrations!) with this material.

Allen McCall showed us a small box he had made using ¼ inch plywood, with a black plastic coating on the back side, as a substrate. He said he applied the veneer to the substrate panel using **Titebond Cold Press Veneer Glue**. He noted that due to the small size of the project, he was able to apply the veneer and clamp it using only tape. However, he discovered that the glue tended to pass through the pores of the wood veneer, leaving glue spots on the surface. However, in my opinion, this condition didn't seem to detract from the beauty of the box.



Allen cut the sides of the box from the veneered material using miter joints at the corners of the box. He cleverly disguised the veneer on the edges of the box sides and lid with black paint, which complemented the black plastic interior.

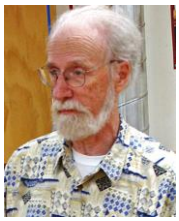
To make the box lid, he noted that he first cut the center panel and then fit the mitered border strips to it, taping the veneer pieces to form a veneer panel, which was subsequently glued to the substrate. **Allen** noted that it was a somewhat frustrating experience!

Herb Stoops brought along a pair of humidors he had recently made using some of the donated veneer materials. He said that he had applied the veneer to plywood substrate panels also using the **Titebond Cold Press Veneer Glue**. However, he developed a glue-up method using clamps and caul plates which he later demonstrated for us in a real time presentation.

Herb noted that both of the humidors employed a similar construction method – veneered panels with abutting solid wood corner posts. He said that was an effective way to cover the exposed ends of the box panels and veneers. It also seemed as though this construction technique added to the appearance of solid sturdiness to the humidors. Well done, **Herb**!

Herb also pointed out that the humidors were lined with **Spanish Cedar** panels, a common wood species used in humidor construction to help control humidity and add a fragrance to the humidor. He also noted that the lids of the boxes were recessed about 1 inch to accommodate the later addition of a hygrometer and a humidistat to control and indicate the level of relative humidity within the humidor to maintain freshness of the cigars.

Another design feature of **Herb's** humidors was the use of quadrant hinges – one of the hardware items common to humidors. However, he noted that the quadrant hinges are somewhat difficult to install, due to the requirement for a deep mortise in each end wall to accommodate the curved keeper which constrains the opening of the lid. He said he is still seeking a better, more fool proof method for making the deep mortises. That said, those quadrant hinges sure do add a quality touch to the humidors, tho! Great job, **Herb**!



Chris Green treated us to a kaleidoscope of colored veneers in his collection of boxes also created using the donated veneer material. Unlike the others, **Chris** chose **Titebond 1** as his glue of choice for these projects.

As seen in the photo, the veneers he selected ranged from subtle blonde tones, to various shades of brown, to deep black, including dyed materials from a muted gray-green to yellow to light orange to a very vibrant orange! What a variety in an exciting, artistic presentation, **Chris**! Very well done!!

For much of the veneered box construction, he appeared to use some form of butt joint to abut the veneered panels, hiding the edges of the veneer. However, on the tall boxes with the rainbow veneer inlays, he used mitered corner joints cut on his table saw. **Chris** noted that the thin, sharp corners of the mitered veneered panels proved to be very fragile and subject to damage in handling – an observation shared by our other presenters. He also pointed out that the arched inlays, which wrapped around the corners of the box, formed a continuous curve.

The beautiful, complex, interlocking mosaic veneer patterns on several of the boxes left most of us scratching our heads with the question, "How'd he do that??" and "How'd he get the parts to fit one another so well??" Fortunately, **Chris** answered those questions in a delightful real time presentation later in the meeting.

Though not specifically expressed, I would venture to say that all of our presenters were of the same opinion that veneering is not an easy technique to use and requires a great deal of patience and careful processing. However, as evidenced by the wonderful projects displayed, veneer offers delightful visual appearances, what with the wide variety of wood species, grain patterns, and natural and dyed colors, many features which would not be available in solid wood.

As most of us have discovered, it requires extra effort and careful execution to achieve the desired results! Woodworking is not a craft that lends itself to speed – the very best joint fitup, pleasing appearance, fine finishes, and that "can't keep from rubbing it!" look usually requires a substantial investment of yourself and a lot of TLC!! But the final product is worth it!

Program Highlight – Veneering

A Cold Press Veneering Method by Herb Stoops

Herb Stoops began our presentations with hands on demonstration of a cold press veneering method he had developed and used successfully to apply veneer to small panels suitable for fabricating boxes, humidors, etc.

To illustrate his method, he took us through a series of processing steps from splicing veneer strips to final clamp up.

He first selected his substrate, which in this case was a piece of Baltic Birch plywood.

Then he selected his pieces of veneer, carefully orienting the pieces to produce the most pleasing grain pattern, deciding where to trim the pieces to suit the panel requirements and remove some of the unwanted defects and sapwood areas.

To trim the veneer, he first overlapped the two pieces and positioned a straight edge along the desired trim line.

Using a **veneer saw** guided along the straight edge, he cut through both pieces simultaneously, producing a matching joint edge on both pieces. **Herb** noted that although other cutting instruments, such as a utility knife can be used, they tend to follow the grain, producing an uneven cut.

He then butted the two veneer strips tightly together and applied a strip of painter's tape to the full length of the joint. He noted that paper veneer tape, either solid or perforated, is also commonly used to secure the

veneer for joining – a material that can be stretched slightly across the joint while wet to apply a constant tension to better ensure joint fitup.

Herb noted that veneers commonly have splits and other defects near the ends of the pieces due to the brittle nature of the material. However, many of these imperfections can be overcome by simply pulling them together and securing them with a strip of tape. He used that technique in several places on his demonstration panel

He then applied **Titebond Cold Press Veneer Glue** to his plywood substrate. One person suggested that as a rule of thumb, approximately 1 ounce of glue per square foot of substrate provides sufficient bonding in most cases. Though other glues can be used successfully as well, this **Titebond Cold Press Glue** product probably has an extended open time to aid assembly of a veneered panel.

He also noted that prior to applying the glue, it is advisable to place some sort of plastic sheet or similar material between the substrate panel and the underlying **caul plate** to keep any residual glue from sticking the two together. **Herb** found that a common kitchen product, **Glad Press 'n' Seal®** worked very well for this application. Alternatively, **caul plates** made from sheet goods with coated or applied surfaces, such as Melamine shelving and plywood with plastic laminate or phenolic surfaces work well. A coat of paste wax will further prevent glue bonding to the **caul plate**.

The next step in the process was to spread the glue on the substrate panel as evenly as possible, in as short time as possible. **Herb** found that using a small plastic roller gave him the desired results. However, he also noted that other means can also be used successfully, such as using a flat scraper or even an old credit card – whatever method works for you to produce an even coating thickness.

He then applied the veneer panel to the glue-covered substrate and smoothed it with his hands, noting that some folks roll the surface to produce intimate contact and even out any excess glue.

Herb then installed a second **caul plate** over the top of the veneered panel, sandwiching the panel between the two flat, rigid, **caul plates**. This is a very important feature of this cold press process – necessary to provide flat reference surfaces, uniform force application across the entire surface of the panel, and intimate contact between the veneer and the substrate panel. Note that his **lower caul plate** was elevated above the workbench on support blocks to allow clearance to apply the clamps.

Herb also used clamp blocks on top of the **upper caul plate** to improve the uniformity of the force application from the clamps. He noted that the clamps and clamp blocks must be applied to the **center of the panel first**, with the outer ones applied sequentially, working toward the outer ends of the panel. This technique tends to squeeze any excess glue from the center of the panel toward the outer ends. He also noted that "More and heftier clamps are better!"

Herb also noted that as part of the learning process, he discovered that the **caul plates** are absolutely necessary to distribute the clamping forces to produce a flat veneered panel. Early on, when he was experimenting, he had glued up some test panels with the clamping blocks but **without** the **caul plates**. When dry, those panels exhibited raised areas **between** the clamp blocks where the veneer was not adhered to the substrate!

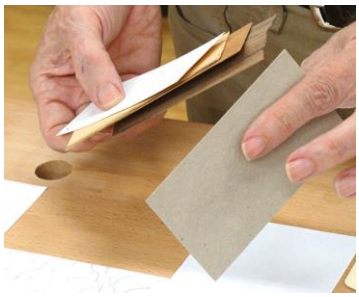
At the end of the meeting, **Herb** unclamped his test panel and showed us a nice, flat veneered panel he had made for us in real time with his cold press process. Thanks for demonstrating your great step-by-step veneer application process. You simplified it so well that any of us should be able to jump right in and do it! Great job, **Herb**!!

Stack Cutting – A Veneer Preparation Technique by Chris Green

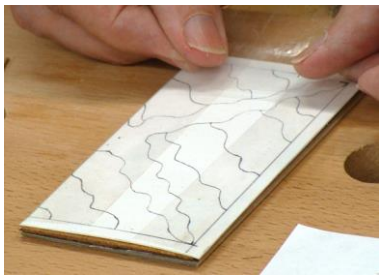
Chris Green treated us to a fascinating presentation about using a scroll saw stack cutting technique to produce the mosaic type veneer pieces he used to build the delightful set of boxes he displayed. Using a carefully prepared set of test articles, he took us through a detailed step-by-step journey from pattern to veneered panel.

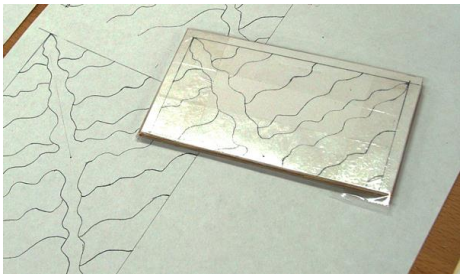
This technique was designed to enable the creation of complex shaped veneer components that will nest closely together with minimal joint lines to form panels which can be fabricated into boxes and other artistic forms. By assembling a multilayer stack of veneers with varying species, colors, and grain patterns and cutting them all at the same time, all of the pieces from the same position in the pattern can be separated from the stack, interchanged, and reassembled into the same relative position, producing identical panel patterns with varying, striking, visual appearances. This technique is probably best suited to small pieces, but could also be used with larger ones.

To begin his process, **Chris** first drew his final mosaic pattern on paper, and established the number of veneered panels, and hence the number of veneer layers, required for his project. He then made multiple pattern copies – one copy for each of the layers + one additional. The additional copy was cut to the size of the panel and a thin cardboard sheet, cut from a file folder, was glued to the back of the pattern to stiffen it. He also cut a similar sized cardboard backer from heavier weight material as a backer for the whole stack.

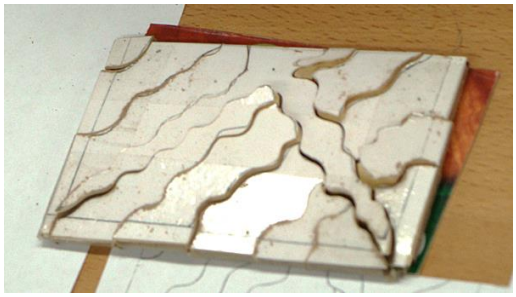


Chris then described the key element to his stack cutting technique – creation of the veneer stack. He cut identical size veneer pieces to match the pattern in sufficient numbers to fabricate all of his desired panels. He then assembled the veneer stack by first placing the pattern (with thin cardboard backer) on top, followed by all of the veneer layers on top of one another with the ***best side on the bottom,*** followed by the heavy cardboard backing panel to complete the stack.





In the next operation, **Chris** applied strips of clear packing tape to cover the entire surface of the veneer stack, overlapping the edges and wrapping onto the back of the cardboard backer. He explained that the clear packing tape not only binds the stack together, but it serves as a lubricant in the subsequent scroll sawing operations.

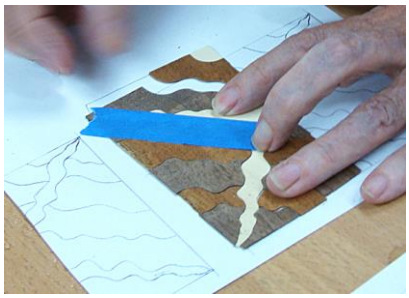


He then scroll sawed the veneer stack in accordance with the pattern lines, using a small diameter, reverse tooth blade. This blade configuration has one set of teeth on each end of the blade which face in opposite directions. **Chris** explained that he uses this style so he can reverse the blade to obtain longer service life.

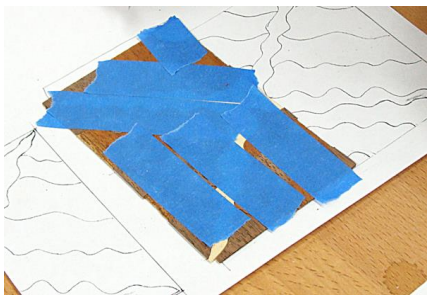
As with all scroll sawing, it is not necessary to cut precisely on the pattern lines. Fortunately, with this stack cutting technique, all of the veneer pieces cut from the same position on the pattern from the same veneer stack will be approximately identical, allowing them to be interchanged with one another to form interesting and unique visual effects. The colored cardboard piece shown under the stack is probably an auxiliary backer which allowed handling during further processing.

And now the fun begins! Carefully separating individual pieces of veneer from the cut stack, **Chris** began assembling them onto the previously printed patterns. These pieces were placed ***with the best side down*** against the pattern in accordance with his predetermined set of panel layouts to produce the desired species, color, and grain pattern mix.

He noted however, that one must exercise extreme care when handling and placing these small pieces. The larger problem appeared to be keeping track of the ***orientation*** of the individual pieces – much like fitting different shaped pieces into a picture puzzle – only worse! I would guess that the first time through that loop is pretty nerve wracking and requires more than a modicum of patience! Not for the faint of heart, I would venture! Ah, but that is part of the challenge, huh **Chris**!!

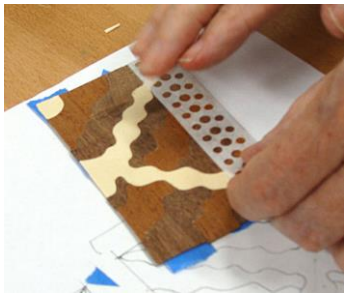


To secure the veneer pieces in place, he carefully aligned adjoining pieces and applied strips of painter's tape, finally covering all of the joints on the veneer panel.

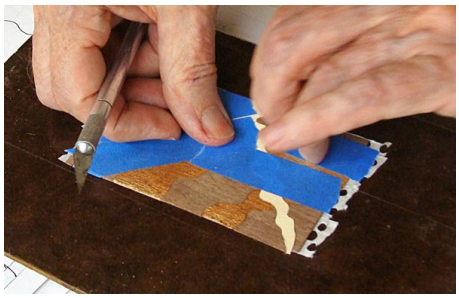


He then flipped the panel over and inspected the fitup of the joints, adjusting the pieces as required. As expected, because of the accuracy produced by the stack cutting technique, the joint fitup was very good.

The next step in the process was the application of perforated paper veneer tape to the face side of the veneer panel. Using a dampened sponge, the strips of perforated tape were moistened, activating the glue and softening the tape a little to allow it to be slightly stretched during application. The perforations in the tape allow observation of the joint lines. Successive strips of the veneer tape were applied until the entire surface of the panel was covered.



The veneered panel was then clamped between two flat, rigid caul plates to flatten the panel and allow the glue on the veneer tape to dry.



After removing the panel from the caul plates, **Chris** flipped the veneer panel over to expose the bottom side with the painter's tape. This is the side of the panel that will ultimately be glued to the substrate. All of the strips of painter's tape were carefully removed so as not to misalign any of the veneer pieces.

To complete the assembly, Chris said applied and spread an even coating of **Titebond 1** glue to his hardboard substrate with an old credit card. After applying the veneer panel to the substrate, the package was clamped between rigid cauls to ensure even contact and maintain flatness.

After the glue was dry, he removed the panel and moistened the veneer tape to soften it for removal. **Chris** said he found that a single edge razor blade makes a very effective tool for this operation. The panel was carefully scraped with the razor blade until all traces of the paper tape had been removed.

The final operation was the sanding of the veneered panel. **Chris** noted that a random orbit sander (ROS) works well for this task, starting with 120 grit disks if the surface is uneven and 220 grit if the surface is fairly even. He cautioned that the ROS tends to thin the edges of the panel, so it is wise to make the panel oversize, allowing final trimming to remove any thinned edges.

Examples of the finished veneered panels are shown in the photo below"

Thanks, **Chris** for such a wonderful, detailed, presentation! We appreciate all of your hard work in organizing the presentation and the preparation of the test samples. This is truly a unique veneer preparation technique, making the fabrication of panels with very complex geometric patterns a very doable and understandable process. Very well done, **Chris**!! Thanks for sharing it with us.

Note from the Editor

To say the least, I was chagrined and frankly embarrased to open the **June 2015** meeting in front of three guests with only ***one*** member present who was not involved in conducting the meeting! What a pathetic testimony to potential members about the **Northwest Woodworkers Association**!

But more than that, I felt badly for **Chris Green** and **Herb Stoops**, who had taken the time and invested significant efforts to prepare very interesting, detailed, educational, and worthwhile

presentations. Thanks, **Chris** and **Herb**, for your faithful support, even if there were so few of us to enjoy and appreciate your fantastic contributions.

I'd like to say a lot more, but I would probably be better off just keeping my thoughts to myself.

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 and forum: http://www.nwwoodworkers.org