

Northwest Woodworkers Association

THE SAWDUST NEWS



December 2015

<http://www.nwwoodworkers.org>

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

The Next Meeting

Date: Thursday, January 28, 2016 at 6:30 PM

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

Program Highlight: The program for this meeting is currently being determined. The program information will be included in the meeting reminder notification to be emailed prior to the next meeting.

December 2015 Meeting Highlights ***Newsletter Photos by Scott Wilson*** ***Meeting Notes by Jan Erickson***

The **December 2015** meeting of the **Northwest Woodworkers Association** was held on **Wednesday, December 2, 2015** at **Woodcraft** with **11** members and one guest present. Since this was scheduled on a different night than usual, we were glad that so many of our members were able to attend and share in the fun.

Thanks to **Charlie Culler** for bringing along one of his neighbors, **Frank Emory** as a guest. We hope you enjoyed the meeting, **Frank**, and that you will attend future meetings.



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

Current Projects & Show 'n' Tell



Charlie Culler reported that he was almost finished with his cherry bedroom set project. He has showed us some of the pieces in the past and we hope he will bring in some more for us to admire.

Charlie also asked for some help in applying a signature to a wooden fishing net frame he is building. Several ideas were presented, including the suggestion to look at Steve Ramsey's YouTube video related to transferring an inkjet photo to wood: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zq2O66QGCwg>. A copy of a signature could be applied using the technique demonstrated in this video.

Mark Martinez noted the he had been working on a cutting board project to use up some of his scrap woods and was on to building a coffee table. You know how the saying goes, **Mark**, "Without the hardware or photos, it didn't happen!" However, he did promise to bring in some pictures.....



Jan Erickson described milling some green logs and the warping and cupping phenomena she encountered. Green wood has a mind of its own, **Jan**, but there is a lot of information on the internet about processing this material to minimize these problems. Bring a book (or a set of books) to read – drying green wood takes a l-o-n-g time.....!:-)



Tom Howorth showed us three projects he has been working on – which ably demonstrated his lathe turning and scroll sawing skills.

On the left of the photo is a lovely Walnut pepper grinder, having a beautiful grain pattern.

In the center is a quixotic Christmas gift – a wooden light switch plate mechanism made to look like the old style industrial knife switches. He noted that it mounts in place of a standard light switch cover and actually works – flipping the handle upward turns on the light and downward turns it off.



On the right is another useful gadget – a wooden bottle opener in the shape of a beer bottle, made by laminating strips of hardwood like one would for a side grain cutting board. He noted that the metal opener hardware was purchased from **Rockler**. Great projects, **Tom**! Thanks for sharing them with us.

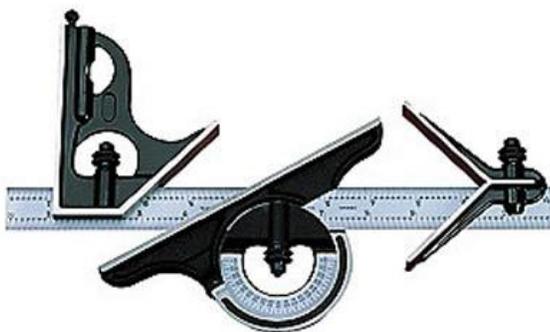
Program Highlight - ***Tools I Count On -- If I Could Remember What They're Used For!***

We were delighted to have **9** of our meeting attendees bring their favorite and “mystery” tools and projects to add to the fun of the night’s program. Thanks to each of you for your active participation. We thoroughly enjoyed your selected favorites and unusual tools and for exposing us to some interesting “mystery” tools that no one could identify!!



A special thanks to **Jan Erickson**, our multi-talented **Association Secretary**, who suggested the theme of the meeting and so ably facilitated it for us. We really appreciate your proactive interest in the **Association** and your cheerful willingness to participate. And, truth be told, the refreshments you brought to the meeting were yummy, as well..... :-)! Thanks, **Jan**.

Bill Bond said that his favorite tool is one which is probably found in almost everyone’s shop – a **Combination Square Set**.



This is a very versatile tool set which finds a wide variety of applications in the wood shop. The **Right Angle/45° Head** is useful for checking parts or tools and setups for square, using as a marking gauge, scribe marking with the built-in scribe, and checking level with the built in level bubble. The **Protractor Head** is useful for making layouts or setting up/checking tools and parts with oblique/and angled surfaces. The **Centering Head** is useful for finding and marking the centers of round parts. In addition, the precision 12” bar usually has engraved

graduations along both edges and both sides, allowing a variety of fractional or decimal (or metric!) measurements and works great as a straight edge for marking or checking tools, parts and fixtures. Truly a versatile tool, **Bill** – a great choice!

[Ed. Note: I have had my original one for over 60 years and use it frequently!]

Bill also noted that another of his favorite tools is the drafting triangle. These high quality plastic triangles are very accurate, low cost tools and are widely available from craft stores and other outlets. These precision tools are typically available in 45°/45°/90° and 30°/60°/90° configurations. **Bill** said he finds them very useful for setting/checking his tool setups, blade angles, miter gauge angles, as well as for drawing.

Dan Cordwell brought along a variety of shop-made tools as well as a couple of “mystery” tools. As shown in the photo, **Dan** showed us a couple of specialized chisels he had made for installing narrow mortised hinges. He explained that he made the chisels from annealed, air hardening tool steel and installed them in file handles after shaping, heat treating, and air hardening.



Dan also showed us a couple of more custom hand tools he had made.



The tool on the left is a custom made router plane which he built and outfitted with a comfortable contoured wooden handle.

The round tool is a sanding block which he configured with a rigid base having a diameter which fits a standard PSA 5” ROS sanding disc. He noted that the rigid base eliminated the flexibility and “give” of the typical rubber sanding block (on the right) and ensured flat sanding of his work surface.

Dan also showed us a custom veneer saw with an improved design. He noted that the typical veneer saws frequently have tooth pitches which are too coarse, producing a rough veneer edge. His fix was to make a comfortable, handsaw type handle to enclose a replaceable fine tooth **X-Acto** saw blade – which he says follows a straight edge very well and produces a nice edge cut.



He also brought out a bench mounted tool with a crank on the side and some rollers and a cutting blade. **[Ed Note: Sure looked a lot like an apple peeling machine to me..... :-)]** No one could guess what it was, so he finally told us that it was an old manual tool for trimming circular sanding discs!



His last offering was a “mystery” tool. There were lots of suggestions about it, but I don’t think anyone was really able to come up with a convincing reason for their choice. ‘Twas an interesting, well made tool, however.



Mark Martinez brought in a collection of this **PPE** (Personal Protective Equipment) noting that these items were a must each and every time he does woodworking! Congratulations, **Mark** – that is exactly the right attitude to have about safety. He showed us a colorful collection of disposable foam ear plugs, commenting that he usually buys them in quantity at **Lowes** or **Home Depot**. He also displayed two types of polycarbonate safety glasses – clear ones for operating in his shop and tinted ones for use when he brings his power tools out in the driveway in nice weather. He also noted that he requires his Cub Scout members to wear the PPE when they are doing projects in his shop – that’s setting a great example to those budding woodworkers, **Mark!** Lastly, he showed us the dual canister respirator he uses, since his shop doesn’t yet have a dust collection system. Thanks for the great reminder about safety, **Mark!!**

He went on to correctly identify his “mystery” tool as a **Multimeter** – although the “mystery” appeared to be how to use it. Such devices are very useful and are typically equipped to make a variety of electrical measurements, including **AC** and **DC Voltage**, **Ohms** (Electrical Resistance), **Circuit Continuity**, etc. However, sometimes the electrical terminology can be very confusing and the operating instructions, which assume the user has a basic understanding of electricity and terminology, are frequently are poorly written. There is a lot of information available on the internet. However, a word of caution – **electricity can be dangerous, and even lethal!!** If you don’t know what you are doing or feel comfortable with it, don’t be poking around electrical things with a multimeter. Instead, call in a professional electrician or ask for help from someone who has more experience with electricity. There are probably a number of us here in the **Association** who could help you – please don’t hesitate to ask.



[Ed. Note: That said, I think one of the most confusing measuring instruments to use is an analog (pointer type) multimeter like the one **Mark** is holding above. There are so many dial settings and scales with and without numbers that it is difficult to be sure you are reading the correct scale, coupled with the fact that you sometimes have to interpret the reading between scale lines!]

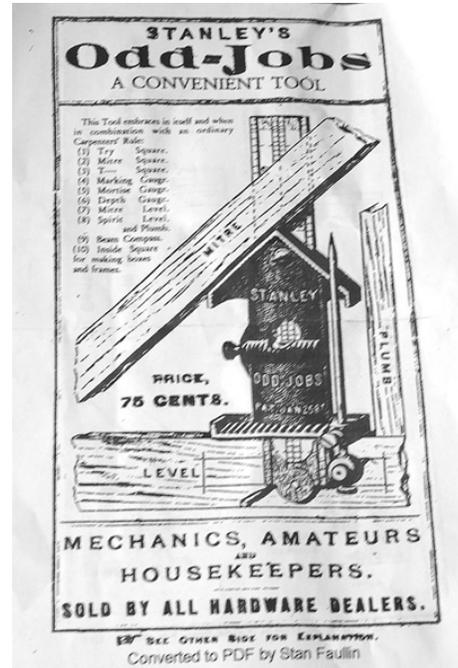


Thomas Naylor brought in two “mystery” tools – one of them, shown in the photo was a real puzzler. He sent it around the group and nobody had a good idea what it might be. Well, **Thomas**, maybe you could at least make it into a backscratcher or some other useful item..... :-)

The other item was a twist drill, which he said he found on the street. The drill looked like one we used to typically see at the Boeing Surplus Outlet, but it had the fluted end ground off to a rather steep angled plane. It is highly doubtful that it could be used for drilling with that end configuration. However, perhaps someone ground the end that way to make a hardened scribe or similar tool. No one could put a positive identification of such a tool, so it too remains a “mystery”. Thanks for bringing these puzzlers, **Thomas** – ya got us scratching our heads!!



Allen McCall showed us a copy of an antique **Stanley** tool, called an **Odd Job Tool**, whose original design was patented in the **1880's**! This tool has a wide variety of uses, as illustrated by a copy of an advertisement for the tool. Check out the price back in the day— **only 75¢!** And it could be used by Housekeepers !!! **Allen** says that even today, this tool finds wide usage in his shop.



As shown in the photo, there are also modern versions of this same versatile tool being marketed by such companies as **Woodpeckers**, **Garret Wade**, and others. What a testimony to an old but enduring, practical tool design!

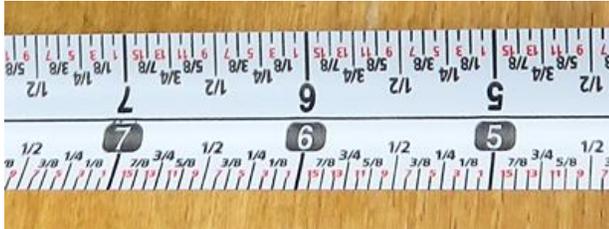


Tom Howorth told us one of his favorite, most used tools in his shop is a **6" steel scale**. He says he has them all over his shop – even going so far as to attach some of them to his machines with small rare earth magnets. He says the low cost versions from **Harbor Freight Tools** have both decimals and fractions and work just fine for him.



Herb Stoops admits unabashedly to being a tape measure guy! He has them in all colors, shapes, and sizes in his shop. Much to our delight, he brought along two of the newest additions to his collection. These unique tape measures are made locally in **Ferndale, WA** by a company named **FastCap**. (<https://www.fastcap.com/>) The two 16 ft. tape measures he displayed are part of the **FastCap Procarpenter Line**, and have several unique features.

Interestingly, both of the tape measures have white blades, which are coated so that you can write on them with a pencil. One of them even has a blank strip along one edge which allows adding pencil marks so the tape can be used as a story stick. The rubberized case has a blank erasable panel on the face to allow writing dimensions, notes, etc. One of the two tapes was designated as a **Righty/Lefty** – meaning that there are two sets of numbers on the tape, making it possible to read the tape with the numbers upright regardless of which end of your part you are measuring from. Surprisingly, the tapes also have 1/16” graduations identified with their corresponding numbers – i.e. 7/16” with red number 7, 13/16” with a red 13, etc.!



Both of the models have built in pencil sharpeners and user friendly blade brake and locking features.

Wow, **Herb**, those tools look like great additions to your collection.

The other tape measure is called a **FlatBack** – so named because the blade is a flat metal strip, not cupped like most conventional tape measures. This unusual configuration allows the tape to make accurate inside and outside measurements of curved parts. Although the conventional cupped shape of most common tape measures allows them to be extended for significant distances without sagging, they are difficult to use on curved parts. Thanks, **Herb** for introducing us to a line of tape measures that provide great improvements over the old standbys we have been using.



Paul Stoops owned up to being a digital readout guy! He says that he makes fewer errors by making measurements with tools that provide discrete numerical readouts. He noted that one of his favorites and most used tools is his digital angle cube. **Paul** mentioned that he has two different digital angle cubes – one of them is an **IGaging**, aluminum-bodied model powered by a 9V battery. The other is a plastic-bodied **Wixey** model which uses two AA alkaline batteries. **Paul** says he finds these angle cubes invaluable for accurately setting/checking his table saw blade angle, setting his miter gauge to precise angles which cannot be read accurately from the gauge markings, and checking parts and jigs with angular surfaces. He also noted that when he remodeled his **Ridgid R4511** granite topped table saw, he incorporated a bracket to hold a digital angle gauge to allow accurate blade angle setting.

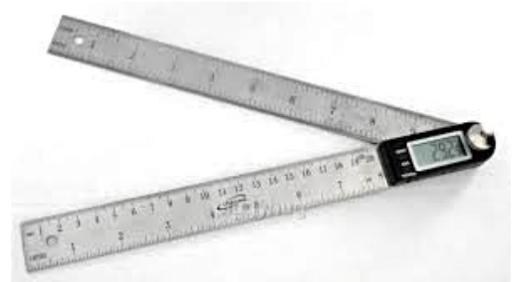


Paul also noted that he frequently uses a **Digital Caliper** for making measurements. He said that he much prefers to work in decimal dimensions instead of fractions – no doubt a throwback from having worked in the aerospace industry for many years. Fortunately, that dimensional system preference fits right in with the wide variety of digital measuring devices available at reasonable prices these days – angle cubes noted above, digital calipers, digital dial indicators, digital protractors, digital multimeters, digital sound meters and others, all providing accurate discrete numerical displays (i.e. What you see is what you get..... :-)).

When looking for a suitable digital caliper last year, he ran across an interesting online video comparing several commonly available models with reasonable prices. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1yqZx_FNbSs). Based upon this comparison review and other research, **Paul** decided to purchase the **IGaging EZCal Model IP54**. This high quality model has a large digital display which is very easy to read. Like most digital calipers, it has the capability to convert the measured value into inches, fractions, and millimeters. In addition, there is a very useful table on the back of the caliper which converts fractions from 0-1” by 64ths into decimal equivalents – great for converting back and forth between fractional and decimal measurement systems. He said he has found this to be a very worthwhile tool investment for less than \$30, with the accuracy and quality of much more expensive models!



Though not as frequently, **Paul** also uses a digital protractor for certain angle measurement and setup tasks. Again, this tool choice is based upon his preference for measurement tools with discrete numerical displays.



Jan Erickson also brought along a variety of her favorite “go to” tools, including a **Digital Caliper**, which she said she values for the many tasks it will perform, like measuring height, depth, and width, as well as using it as an accurate marking gauge. She too likes to be able to see the tool setting or measurement clearly indicated on the tool digital display.

She also showed us some foam-backed sandpaper pads she bought from **Lee Valley** that are so flexible she can mold them to match curved surfaces like molded edge trim, moldings, etc., also noting that they work well for fine tuning box joints.

Jan also displayed a set of brass dimensional set up bars which are very useful for setting router bit and saw blade height. A fine toothed flush cutting saw and flexible plastic rulers were among her favorites as well.

Her last tool, a **Starret Angle Protractor**, shown in the photo above, was not a mystery to her, but apparently how to use it was. The consensus of the group was that it was a fine, accurate tool, but not well suited to small projects like boxes, etc., due to the large radius of the hinged dial. Perhaps a digital protractor, like the one shown above, would be more suitable, **Jan**.



Near the end of the meeting, **Herb Stoops** brought out a very rustic looking tool which he has had in his shop for some time – a “mallet” made from a tree branch! He noted, however, that the angle of the handle (branch) and the head (trunk section) just didn’t feel quite right.

So he proceeded to show us a nice jig that he had made to make an improved version of the mallet using hardwood pieces custom milled for the application. He then went through the design features of the mallet and his assembly sequence to produce an improved version compared to his tree branch model.

I suspect that at that point most of us were thinking, *“Why would he go through all the trouble to make a well designed jig to make himself a mallet to use in his shop?”*

Well, the answer to that question was soon forthcoming, as **Herb** opened a box and brought out a bunch of finely crafted hardwood mallets, one for each of the members present – one of his traditional Christmas presents to the **Association** members!! Such an innovative and gracious gift, **Herb!** What a generous way to display your many woodworking talents and abilities in crafting such a lovely, useful gift. A hearty **“Thanks!”** from each of us!!



[**Ed. Note:** It will take me a while to bring myself to whack anything with such a beautifully made tool..... :-)!]

Upcoming Events

The **Steering Committee** is in the process of developing a new schedule of meeting programs and activities for 2016. Suggestions from the members in the meeting included making machine cut dovetails, scroll sawing, and dyeing wood projects. **Bill Bond** also suggested that perhaps we could arrange to meet at some of the member’s shops and “cut wood and make stuff”! If you have any suggestions for programs or activities including tours, guest speakers, group activities, etc., please contact **Steering Committee** members **Bill Bond** or **Mark Martinez**. Their contact information is contained the **Contacts** section of this **Newsletter**. We want to provide meeting content that is educational, interesting, and meets the needs of our **Association** members. Please help us do this important planning by providing your input.

Note from the Editor



I trust that everyone had a good Thanksgiving, full of holiday fun, family, and fare that somehow attacks our waistlines every year! I was very pleased to see such a nice attendance at this **December 2015** meeting, in spite of the change in meeting day and the dreary weather. Thank you all for your proactive participation in bringing such interesting and mysterious tools and projects to share. This was a really fun meeting with lots of laughs and joining in. This is what makes the **Association** great! Those of you who weren't here missed a good one!!

I found it fascinating that there was such a wide variety of favorite tools displayed and discussed by our members, And did you notice that there was not much overlap in the favorite choices? To me that speaks to the fact that we are each unique in our likes and dislikes and our ways of approaching the wonderful woodworking craft we so love! Ain't it great??!! I love it!!

Besides, it gets me to thinking, "***Hmm, wouldn't it be nice to have one of those to add to my collection.....!***"

I want to thank **Jan Erickson** for being proactive and suggesting the theme of this meeting. But more than that, **Jan**, thanks for stepping up and volunteering to facilitate the meeting for us. You did a terrific job, to the enjoyment of all present!

Using **Jan** as an example, I want to encourage all of our members to contribute program suggestions and ideas and be willing to step forward and lead a meeting. The **Steering Committee** is more than willing to help you prepare and present a meeting program. It might seem strange at first to stand up in front of the group to lead a program, but in reality it isn't any more difficult than offering comments and suggestions while sitting in the audience. None of our folks bite or snarl – and besides, now we have some nice hardwood mallets to keep any errant members in line..... :-)) Like the old saying, "***It is more blessed to give than to receive.***" Each of us has something to contribute to the **Association**. Will you share yours?

Also, a special thanks to **Scott Wilson**, our **Staff Photographer** for the great photos. Your new camera performed beautifully. But of course kudos, too, to the guy making it work.....! Great pics, **Scott!!**

Happy Woodworking!
I wish you all a blessed Christmas!
Have a safe and Happy New Year!
See ya in 2016!

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>

