



Michigan Woodworker

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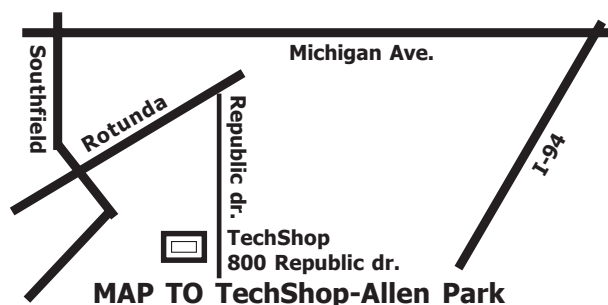


Michigan Woodworkers Guild (Est. 1981) March 2014 Vol. 35 No. 3

March Meeting Saturday, March 8

At the TechShop in Allen Park from 12 PM to 4 PM
Showcase Of Woodworking Skills. Guild members will
exhibit their projects. Set up time is 10 - 11:30 AM

The March luncheon is the 27th, 1:16 PM, at **Jimi's**
in **Royal Oak**



Calendar Of Events

The April 13th meeting will be at the TechShop in Allen Park. Clay Bolduc and SteveVaerten will present **Scroll Saw Techniques and Pen Turning**.

The April luncheon will be at Jimi's on the 24th at 1:16 PM

The May 18th meeting at the TechShop in Allen Park will be on **Jigs and Tools** made by or purchased by guild members.

The May luncheon will be at Jimi's on the 22nd at 1:16PM.

The June 8th meeting will be a field trip. The details of the trip are currently being planned.

The June luncheon will be at Jimi's on the 26th at 1:16PM.

There is no July meeting as this is the Guild's one month shut down. The Guild picnic will be held August 10 at the VFW park in Royal Oak.

President's Corner

by John Sanchez

If you're like me, you are tired of the harsh Winter weather. I have had it with the snow and ice. Hopefully spring is around the corner.

Despite the inclement weather George Walker, our guest speaker, drove through the snow from Ohio for our last meeting. George talked about the principles involved in furniture design. It was very reminiscent of geometry. These principles date back many centuries. For a more in depth account see Dale Ausherman's column. Thanks go to Al Goldstein and Gary Assarian for providing us with this month's speaker.

March the 8th is approaching and our annual Showcase of Skills is on tap. The last couple of years we've had very little participation from our members. I would like more participation from our members this year. The project you bring does not have to be completed. If you did not sign the signup sheet, let Ed Stuckey know if you are bringing an item. It will help us figure out how many tables to set up. For the first time, Guild members will be able to sell items at this years show. The item(s) being sold cannot be store bought items such as tools, power equipment or wood. It has to be something that you made. For the Guild members who do not bring in an item, please support to your fellow woodworkers by attending the show. It is free admission and parking. What could be better. I hope to see all 306 Guild and family members at this years show.

The Editors Two Cents

by Peter Goddard

I found the February meeting with George Walker to be particularly interesting. George presented an approach to design which, while new to many current woodworkers, is much older than the methods most of us are used to applying. When I think in terms of furniture design, I tend to be driven by function. For example, if I am designing a table, what size (length, width, height, etc) does it need to be. This is largely driven by function (coffee table, end table, etc). If the perceived functional need does not result in a design for the piece that seems attractive, I often have no clue exactly why. George, in collaboration with Jim

Tolpin, has identified a historical approach that I think will provide a great deal of assistance in developing my designs in the future.

I could not resist, so I bought the book "By Hand and Eye" by George Walker and Jim Tolpin and George's DVD at the meeting. I am not all the way through these two items, but feel safe in recommending both the book and DVD to anyone who missed the meeting. This is a new yet ancient way of approaching design that has considerable merit.

As identified in the last newsletter and through various emails, the Guild was prepared to support the Woodworking Show as it returned to Detroit. The notice was short, only a couple of weeks, but our President and the executive board immediately started preparation work. Members were identified to help with setting up the booth, manning the booth, and providing demonstrations at the show. Despite the board members best efforts, the staff member(s?) on the Woodworking Show team did not respond to inquiries and finally caused the Guild to withdraw support. The show did, however, take place. I attended the show on Friday, February 14. The show was somewhat smaller than in past years, but was not unreasonably small. There was at least one demonstrator going continuously. Attendance seemed to me to be lower than at the previous shows. Some of that lower attendance almost certainly related to the short notice that the show was coming to the Detroit area. The show was well done, given the short time available to set it up. In my opinion, attendance at the show was definitely worth the entrance fee.

The local Detroit Area Woodturners had a considerable presence at the show and were demonstrating continuously in two locations. They estimate that a total of ten new memberships will be the final result. I suspect that they were coordinating with a much more responsive individual on the Woodworking Show staff than we were. I have the impression that if the Woodworking Show management was made aware of the utter lack of responsiveness we experienced, the employee we were attempting to coordinate with would be invited to find opportunities more closely aligned with his talents.

The March meeting is the "Showcase Of Woodworking Skills" meeting. The annual showcase meeting is always interesting. The diversity of the work of the various members along with the workshops and demonstrations that are scheduled make attendance something that every member should attempt.

Meeting Review by Dale Auscherman

George Walker – Classical Roots of Furniture Design
9 February 2014

Have you ever designed and built something that just didn't look quite right? Maybe something about the shapes involved just was not as pleasing as you expected? Or, have you ever studied a piece of furniture whose lines you really admire, but you cannot explain why? These are dilemmas experienced by many craftsmen attempting to make things pleasing to the eye. At our February meeting respected design expert George R. Walker instructed the Guild on classical foundations of design, arming us with insight and tools to begin to understand why certain proportions on some things look good, and to create designs which will be pleasing to the eye. Basically such designs rely on simple integer unit proportions in dimensions and applied decorations. George, who resides near Sandusky Ohio, is the author of the *Popular Woodworking Magazine* series "Design Matters", and co-author (with Jim Tolpin) of the book *By Hand & Eye* from Lost Art Press. He is also responsible for two Lie Nielsen DVDs, "Unlocking the Secrets of Traditional Design" and "Unlocking the Secrets of Traditional Design: Moldings". Additionally, he is the creator of the wonderful blog with the same name as his articles, *Design Matters* (<http://georgewalkerdesign.wordpress.com>). While many woodworkers have a principal interest in furniture design, the classical approaches championed by George are equally applicable to other woodworking projects, as well as arts such as architecture, garden layout, sculpture, jewelry, etc.

George taught that an ability to create or understand good design requires development of two key human traits; an ability to internally visualize a design, and a means of tapping an inner sense of good design. If these features are not naturally strong in a person's makeup, they can be developed with study and practice, such as George himself has undertaken over

the last seven years. These design principles are evident in ancient architecture, as is documented in Roman architect Vitruvius' multi-volume work *De Architectura* (1st Century BC), and as illustrated by the works of Michelangelo, Da Vinci, and many others. To help set the stage for good design George showed examples of obvious poor design, including the Da Vinci "Grotesques" faces which illustrated how unnatural human proportions can be quite ugly. As tantalizing examples of good design he showed wonderful period furniture reproductions such as Alan Breed's Chippendale Goddard tea table, and a Federal demi lune card table of design similar to the beautiful table recently completed by the Guild's Ed Stuckey.

How does one acquire an appreciation of pleasing design? George indicated that much of our understanding is acquired by examples in our lives. He showed a "Circle" of relationships between things in our world which impact our understanding of what looks good, including the human form itself, architecture, nature, music, and an ability to understand the simple concept of integer proportions ($1/2$, $1/4$, etc.). He then illustrated each contributing factor with examples from nature, music, furniture and architecture.

To internalize these classic design principles using simple proportions, George encouraged us to build a design "alphabet" in our heads. Most pleasing designs are made up circles and squares with integer unit proportions, for example simple ratios that can be expressed as a multiple of a square: $1:1 = 1$ square, $1:2 = 2$ squares, $2:3 = 1 \text{ \& } 1/2$ squares, $3:4 = 1 \text{ \& } 1/3$ squares, etc. Uses of these dimensional ratios for design elements have been known for millennia to result in pleasing designs. Even the Bible talks of the simple unit proportions of the Covenant of the Arc. Period furniture designs are replete with examples. George showed photos of representative 18th century furniture with overlays of unit circles and squares, etc. He also spoke of the related design principles of *symmetry* (equal halves), *contrast* (harmonious non-competing major/minor pieces), and *punctuation* (small unit ratio pieces at the end of things, such as creation of small borders) and gave examples of each

from architecture and furniture. George also noted that period cabinetmakers often did not design from scratch but relied on published design books (many from Europe) for inspiration. Many of these decorative arts books derived from classical architecture and its renewed popularity during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Interestingly, virtually no design drawings exist from the early furniture periods, in spite of the preservation of many other paper records of the eras. Apparently these furniture makers did not use drawings. Instead they laid out their work using simple tools such as dividers, straight edges and story sticks. These methods were enabled by the simple element ratios of the underlying unit circles and squares.

George then discussed the reflection of these design principles in classical Greek architecture. These architectural forms, which developed over thousands of years, exemplify the use of unit ratios of proportionality. The unit ratios were codified in the five classic orders of columns; Tuscan, Doric, Ionic, Corinthian, and Composite (Corinthian on steroids). His book contains exercises to draw simple representations of these orders to help the reader understand and internalize these proportionality principles. George gave additional examples from period furniture and architectural woodwork, including decorative elements such as inlays and moldings.

Finally, George extended the notion of simple unit proportions to the compass layout of *curvilinear* design elements such as cyma curves in table aprons, cabriole legs, and molding profiles. Again, simple ratios of curvature were used, such as semicircles, $\frac{1}{4}$ circles, $\frac{1}{6}$ circles, $\frac{1}{9}$ circles, etc. These drawing techniques can be used to aid furniture design drawings, or to layout designs on the work pieces themselves, as would have been done by period furniture makers. These techniques are documented in George's book, with examples applicable to furniture design. DAA

Wood Types by Ed Stuckey

AYAN Growth

Ayan grows to between 90 and 125ft (27 and 38m) in height, with a diameter of 21/2-5ft (0.8-1.5m). The bole is straight and cylindrical. It is also known as movingue and distemonanthus (UK); Nigerian satinwood (US and UK); barre (Ivory Coast); ayanran (Nigeria); bonsamdua (Ghana); eyen (Cameroon); ogueminia (Gaboony); and okpe (Togo).

Appearance

The sapwood is pale yellow in color and not clearly demarcated from the heartwood, which varies in color from lemon-yellow to golden brown. The grain is often irregular and interlocked, and sometimes wavy. It may contain silica. The texture is fine and even, and the surface lustrous.

Properties

The weight varies from 37 to 48 lb/ft³ (590 to 770kg/m³), averaging about 42 lb/ft³ (670kg/m³) when seasoned. The heavier wood tends to be slightly darker in color. It dries fairly rapidly and well, with little tendency to split or warp, and has very good dimensional stability. It is dense, has medium bending strength, high crushing strength, low stiffness and shock resistance, and good compression strength along the grain. It has a moderate steam bending classification. The material is fairly difficult to machine, with moderate to severe blunting of tools caused by silica in the wood; gum build-up on saws requires an increased set. Nailing requires preboring. The timber glues well, and if the grain is first filled, a very good finish can be obtained. It is moderately durable, showing some resistance to termites in west Africa. The heartwood is resistant to preservative treatment.

Uses

Ayan is used for exterior joinery, doors, window frames and sills, and ships fittings; it is also utilized for interior joinery, furniture, and cabinet work, and for road and railway vehicle building. Its resilience makes it ideal for domestic and gymnasium floors.

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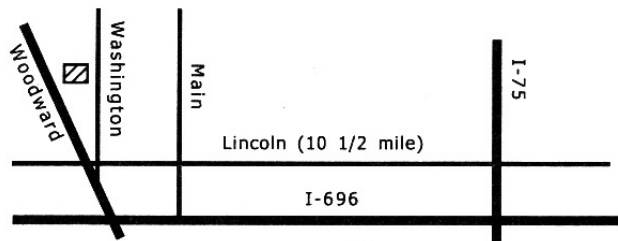
Power Tool Sale 3/1-3/28/2014

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For membership information, contact Bill Gayde at 25575 York, Royal Oak, Mi, 48067 or by phone at 248-543-3487 or by email at: williamgayde@comcast.net.

For name tags, sign up with Ed Stuckey at a regular meeting



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Jeff Wilmot



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The Picture Gallery



George Walker Explaining Classic Proportional Design Concepts To The Guild
