



# MICHIGAN WOODWORKER

michiganwoodworkersguild.com



Michigan Woodworkers' Guild (est. 1981) October 2020 Vol. 41 No. 10

When / Where:

**SUNDAY, OCT 11, 2020**

(Virtual Meeting starts: 1:59 pm)

TOPIC:

Titebond's Bob Behnke will showcase  
Adhesives

- COORDINATED BY RAGNAR BERGETHON

**ZOOM MEETING START TIME: 1:59 PM**

The Guild luncheon will be at the George's Senate Coney  
Island on ~~October 12th at 1:16 pm~~ (see map on page 10)

**CANCELLED**



**VIRTUAL MEETING**

**ZOOM CONNECTION DETAILS TO BE SENT  
BY JERRY ROMITO**



Michigan Woodworker's Guild meetings have gone digital. To ensure everyone's safety, our monthly meetings for October and November will be held via Zoom. Look for an email message in your inbox from our President **Jerry Romito** with the Zoom access details that are unique for each meeting.

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Although still in the works, we may have an encore presentation by **Tom McLaughlin** for our Nov. 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. This is now a **Zoom** virtual meeting.

The monthly luncheon will be at George's Coney Island on the November 19<sup>th</sup> at 1:16 pm

**CANCELLED**

**NO MEETING OR  
LUNCHEON IS  
SCHEDULED FOR  
DECEMBER**

**THE JANUARY  
MEETING TOPIC AND  
LOCATION TO BE  
ANNOUNCED**

The monthly luncheon will be at George's Coney Island on the January 28<sup>th</sup> at 1:16 pm

**CANCELLED**

**THE FEBRUARY  
MEETING TOPIC AND  
LOCATION TO BE  
ANNOUNCED**

The monthly luncheon will be at George's Coney Island on the February 25<sup>th</sup> at 1:16 pm

**CANCELLED**



## President's Corner

By Jerry Romito



Well, Corona still has our meeting venues closed, so we continue to have no opportunity for our monthly in-person meetings. But we are having some success with our remote meetings. The September remote Zoom presentation by Will Stanford of his personal woodworking gallery was viewed by 38 members, and Tom McLaughlin's live YouTube presentation for our June meeting was viewed by 48 members. Since our typical in-person meetings draw 50-60 members, the remote meetings clearly leave something to be desired, but that is understandable, since our regular meetings provide so much social interaction and communication.

With no live meetings, I have been operating on the assumption that our newly enhanced monthly newsletter was providing some measure of communication to our 179 members. But since I don't know how many members actually read the newsletter, I posted a request in my column last month asking those who read the newsletter to acknowledge that they did so by sending me an email. To my dismay, I received only 26 replies. Many of those replies expressed their appreciation for the newsletter, and indicated that they look forward to it, but apparently 85 percent of our members don't read it. (I'll have to see if our Editor is going to hold me to giving him a dovetail machine for losing the bet. But heck, he should be cutting dovetails by hand anyway).

With this low response in mind, I hesitate to think about how few of our members look at our website. But at this moment our website is not operating properly and needs repairs, so I am hard pressed to vigorously promote it. We are working on it. Also, I wonder how many members read my emails. You may be getting a survey from me to check that out.

I have been President of this fine Guild for not quite one year now. I am impressed and humbled by the

immense woodworking talent, longevity, and camaraderie among the core group of members who regularly attend meetings. But we have to face the fact that we are not getting any younger. At the same time, recognize that hobbies like woodworking, which have been so important to our "senior" generation, have been going out of favor with the younger generations. So perhaps a transition is taking place, but I still hope to retain the Guild spirit that has infused the group for so many years as well as to attract new members.

Of course Covid is not helping this, but we are working on the possibility of bringing professional woodworking instructors on a more regular basis, remotely for now, and then in-person when things improve. This month via Zoom, on Sunday, October 11, at 1:59 pm, Titebond rep, Bob Behnke, will be presenting "5 Steps to Wood Gluing". I will be emailing the Zoom link a few days before the meeting. Also, look for Tom McLaughlin to be presenting another private MWG YouTube seminar on Saturday, November 7, 2020. More details to follow.

So for now, please continue to stay safe and let's look forward to the day when we can be together again.

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## MEETING REVIEW

By Dale Aushman



Due to the persistent Coronavirus restrictions on large meetings, the Guild has continued exploring ways to entertain and educate our members in the craft of woodworking. As an excellent substitute for our September meeting, the Guild prepared and streamed an hour-long video tour of the gallery of long-time member and professional woodworker Will Stanford. Any member with an internet-connected viewing device could participate in this wonderful tour.

Since beginning my stint as meeting reporter in 2008 I have documented Will's generous contributions to our meetings and events, and there were likely other cases before my time in the Guild. In both 2013 and 2014 he impressed visitors to our annual Showcase of Skills by displaying wonderful examples of his high-end studio furniture projects. And in May of 2016 he conducted an entire program, sharing with us the fundamental woodworking processes used in his shop, including tools and methods which have proven to be of high value to a professional for whom time and efficiency are essential. For this month's September video tour we had the pleasure of seeing the results of his decades of craftsmanship coupled with his high aesthetic standards.

The tour took place in Will's Monroe Michigan studio, situated in his 1906 stone house with cedar shingles and wonderful period Oak woodwork and flooring. The home has a 26 ft. living room which serves nicely as a showplace. Will is a full time professional whose works have been featured in art galleries and national publications. Will is a self-taught woodworker, although he



is inspired by the work of important past professionals such as James Krenov and George Nakashima. His shop is in his two-car garage, with two basement rooms for glue-up and finishing. Will started in woodworking by forming a company to build planters, trellises, arbors, and birdhouses, selling them to local garden centers and nurseries. After a while he moved to working craft shows, and for the last 25 years has been working high-end art shows throughout the Midwest and East coast, offering wood boxes, furniture, painting and sculpture.

Will relates that the art show circuit is very demanding, with hard work transporting and setting up goods and a booth, and often costly due to booth fees, transportation, food and lodging over a multi-day show. And bad weather can be hard on both exhibitors and artwork, especially fine furniture. Nonetheless Will stuck with it over the last 25 years. However, the 2008 economic downturn was very hard on the economic viability of the shows, and business was just getting back to normal when the Pandemic hit, basically shutting it all down. Will says it is hard to predict the future of art shows regarding attendance, and he is not totally confident they will ever be fully back.

Thus recently he has been focusing on hosting shows in his home studio, advertised by brochures and including private shows by invitation. Compared to a mobile art show booth, the studio shows have the advantage of showing more pieces, and exhibiting both large (furniture) and small pieces simultaneously, which is challenging to do in a portable booth. Also, the home shows provide greater opportunities for arranging commissioned pieces.

Will has ingrained woodworking design preferences, using a diversity of American hardwoods species in



a single piece, with emphasis on interesting wood figure. He likes to include natural wood blemishes such as sapwood, cracks, live edges,



spalting, worm holes, etc. All of these elements are chosen to coexist in a “harmonious” manner to avoid “chaos.” The blemishes aspect of his design preferences follows the Japanese aesthetic of Wabi-sabi style, or “finding beauty in imperfections.” His pieces are typically combinations of lightweight, clean-line elements, with many using glass shelves or tops to enable the beauty of the structural and decorative wood elements to show through. Some incorporate stone and metal elements to provide a more contemporary feel. He builds his pieces to last for generations, using high-quality joinery including mortise & tenon, half-lap, dovetails, and even sliding dovetails.

Will showed us many of his favorite wood pieces,



including furniture, table or wall sculptures, and boxes. There were too many to cover in this limited space, so I will provide a few highlights. Eventually

the video tour will be available for viewing on our Guild website, and one can view Will’s Facebook page for additional examples and photos. [www.facebook.com/pg/willstanfordartist/photos/?ref=page\\_internal](https://www.facebook.com/pg/willstanfordartist/photos/?ref=page_internal)

Will first showed one of his favorite and most complex pieces, a set of shelves he calls an *étagère*, French for shelves. This piece has Tiger Maple for legs/stiles and Cherry for rails to hold the glass shelves. The bottom shelf is thick slate for piece stability, with Walnut feet underneath. Next came his “Myth” cabinet, a tall narrow cabinet with a single full-length ash frame and Mahogany panel door, currently used to store various bottles of Bourbon. It has top-to-bottom tapered Cherry legs terminating in ebonized wide feet at the bottom for stability. This cabinet is often featured in the photos used on Will’s art show brochures. Following was a discussion



of his “Land-Shark” low table, so named because of the shark-mouth-shaped piece of highly figured Elm forming the top. Attractive imperfections of cracks and punky areas had been “repaired” by use of several contrasting inlaid butterflies. Also one punky area had been solidified by use of super glue.

We then moved on to a high-aspect-ratio tapered-top hall table, with a top of Claro Walnut, a somewhat rare American hardwood from California. The table had contrasting Oak legs, some with areas of filled worm holes whose pattern was quite attractive. Again, a bit of Wabi-sabi aesthetic. Next to the table was a low bench whose long trapezoidal seat was of live-edge walnut, with light sapwood left on for contrast. Legs were Cherry, and the rails and narrow back were of ash. The back had an end crack solidified by a contrasting wood butterfly. Will related that at a show an attendee said “you could have easily just cut off that cracked end,” but Will countered with “I bought it for the crack!”



Will then displayed a large wonderful low coffee table with a waterfall crotch Mahogany top. The top board had been resawn, opened and rejoined book matched, with a small gap in the longitudinal center joined with several contracting butterflies.



This fabulous piece had Butternut legs with figured Cherry rails and stretchers. Later he showed the extra hidden work in some crosswise battens screwed on under the top to provide stability to the large top halves. The screw holes were appropriately elongated to account for lateral seasonal wood movement. Then Will showed another low Bench of curly Hard Maple back and Walnut seat with two large butterflies



for fill, and explained his thought processes behind the selection of the wood pieces based on their similar figure features.

The next piece discussed moved us into his glass-topped genre of furniture. This one was a rectangular glass-topped coffee table with an underlying frame of Butternut legs and rails, and decorative spalted-Maple cross-pieces. Will described this as a Midcentury Modern look. Another glass topped table was a round 52 inch diameter coffee table with spalted Maple and Cherry legs and rails.



The glass was made to float above the leg assembly with wood pegs, and some decorative triangles of figured wood were added under the glass. And he showed a smaller long hall table, rectangular with floating glass. Under the glass was a long figured piece with a pair of little Koa wood tabs (like an equal sign “=”) as accent pieces. Koa wood comes from Hawaii. Will has made about 10 copies of this popular convenient size table, all with different woods and accents.

A piece of very rare “ingrown bark” Cherry comprised the top of the next bench presented by Will. Ingrown bark is where a small quantity of bark is nearly or entirely enclosed in wood due to some injury to a tree during growing years. When milling brings this ingrown bark to the surface it forms a really beautiful feature in the wood. This is the only piece of such wood ever possessed by Will. Because the “live edge” of this wood was thin and therefore fragile, Will needed a secure bench which would not topple, so he made wide sandstone slab “legs” (really slabs) for each end. The Ash single thick through stretcher had to be square- mortised through the sandstone, an interesting and difficult effort for a woodworker.

Will revealed several other really unique and beautiful tables, but space requires moving to discussion of

his wall sculptures. These are medium to large decorative wood structures intended as wall art. They retain Will’s affinity for multiple wood species with good figure all joined in artistic fashion. They typically comprise longer vertical “stiles” with various crosswise “rails.” One he called his Kimono shelf, due to its



Japanese construction flavor and shape. His wood wall art sculptures typically had even more numbers of exotic species than his furniture, adding

Yellow Heart and Purple Heart to the choices, and some contained small figured slabs of naturally-shaped live edge wood. With finish applied these pieces were spectacular in their diversity and texture, all harmonious of course. Some of these wall pieces are shown in the accompanying photo of the studio.

Next Will moved us to review of his smaller “mantle pieces,” including many wonderful small boxes and a “Radio Days” Art Deco style clock. He has produced many styles of boxes over the years, and typically produces a run of about 10 for each design, supported in many cases by use of specialty jigs for producing multiples of small pieces. He will use a variety of wood species and figures across the 10 units. Two of his boxes went from the Mayor of Monroe,



MI to the Mayor of their Japanese sister city of Kofu. The boxes tend to be Japanese in appearance, and many adhere to the Wabi-sabi aesthetic. He uses exotic

woods for the boxes, including Lacewood, and once some rare spalted Zebrawood. He sometimes makes special partitioned interiors to enable use as jewelry boxes. Will says the boxes are very time consuming, and that precise mitered glue up can be especially challenging. One of his favorite boxes he calls the



“Mojo” box. It reminded me of a Samurai warrior, standing off the ground on little stilts and with arms raised to the sky.

He finished the tour by showing an in-progress dining table, with a top made of a sliced live edge Walnut slab, with the resultant book matched pieces again to be joined with an intentional



small gap via butterflies. He built a framed router jig to ease the flattening of the top. He has had the slab for this table for over 10 years so it should be very stable. He also showed his substantial inventory of wonderfully varied wood boards. Again, he generally buys interesting single boards, rather than large quantities. Customers can peruse these boards to get inspiration as to what he may build for them.



Speaking of commissioned pieces, Will says he gives clients free choice of style and materials, but does try to encourage them to adopt his natural design inclinations which are evident in the studio pieces. Will has a policy that if a client is not happy with the final product, the piece can be returned at no cost. But he clearly has well-satisfied customers as a return has never happened in all his years of building these beautiful yet functional pieces of art.

We thank the officers for arranging this wonderful video tour, and of course Will for sharing his amazing studio and work.

- Dale Aushman



## MEMBER NOTES / ASKS



**FREE TO GOOD HOME:**

Longstanding MWG Member, Bob York, has approximately 300 magazines from Shop Notes, Woodsmith, and Fine Woodworking which he would like to give away.

Contact Bob at: (313) 505-5094  
E-mail: reyork1@aol.com



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**CHILDREN'S  
HOSPITAL  
MWG PROGRAM  
UPDATE**



**From Ron, Ken, and Dan:**

Fellow Members, the Children's Hospital Toy & Box Program is still alive and kickin' despite the ongoing pandemic. In the interest of keeping everyone safe, we will be setting up a time and place(s) in late November/Early December where members can drop off their finished toys, memory boxes and plain boxes so that Ken, Ron and Dan can deliver them to Children's Hospital prior to their annual Christmas Snowpile to support holiday parties in the various children's departments.



Most likely the drop off points will be at the Royal Oak Senior Center and the Livonia Senior Center on the appointed day and time. One of the toy committee members will be there waiting to receive your finished items. For those members that live downriver, an alternate site at the Southgate Senior Center in Southgate MI can also be arranged. As an alternative, if you cannot make the appointed date and time, the items can be dropped off at either Ken's, Ron's or



Dan's homes by contacting them ahead of time.

As has always been the policy, the Guild will provide wheels (1", 1 1/4" or 1 1/2" dia), nylon washers and wheel pegs free of charge to any member who wishes to make toys for this program. If you need these items, they can be obtained by contacting either Ken, Ron or Dan. If you would like some ideas for toys, patterns are available on our guild website. You are free to use patterns of your choice as well. Hospital toy guidelines are also available on our website.

As a source of inspiration, I'm including images of toys built by Ron and Dan and a memory box by Clay Bolduc.

We all realize that this year has been especially difficult for all involved. For those families with children being treated at the hospital imagine how much more difficult the pandemic situation has been for them. This is the one program MWG does annually to benefit those children who really, really need a reason to smile. Please make every effort to support this Guild program.

For further information or to arrange to drop off toys, please contact:

Ken - 734-981-3423 - wolfkenneth@att.net  
Ron - 734- 812-5531 - rross1508@gmail.com  
Dan - 313-702-5836 - dan56laura@att.net

Thank you all very much

Ken, Ron & Dan (MWG Children's Hospital  
Toy Committee)



**PROJECT REVIEW**



**By MWG Members**

**From the Rich Herbert:**

I finally Finished my Demilune table. It took me almost three years, on and off of course.



The inspiration to build this table came many years ago from my good woodworking buddy Ed Stuckey. We both belong to the Michigan Woodworkers and SAPFM. Ed built a beautiful Demilune card table which many of the Michigan woodworkers have seen.

In 2017, I took a class at Marc Adams with Mark Arnold whose basic design I used. I have also studied with Steve Latta and studied his tapes which inspired many of the details in this table.



The table was built using the bricking method, with veneers consisting of Crotch Mahogany and Satinwood on the top and Mahogany on the apron. The inlays and bands are made from Holy, Ebony and other woods which I made in my shop, other than the semi-circle banding on the top, which was done at school. The finish is hand rubbed Shellac.

Rich Herbert

**From the Bob Mills:**

Boards for Billionaires? Henry Ford II students are gaining an international reputation for creating paddle boards that feature unique woodworking process  
Posted on 09/11/2020

Self-made billionaires. A famous actress. Home improvement stars. The list keeps growing.

Now in its third year, a woodworking program at Henry Ford II High School is becoming the place to go for international figures who enjoy water sports and want to support local students who are breaking barriers through creativity and teamwork.

Over the past two years, the woodworking program has honored requests from Virgin Records founder Sir Richard Branson, Cabin Reno HGTV star Kristy Petrillo, Varsity Blues actress Amy Smart and Trading Places husband Carter Oosterhouse, and Spanx





founder Sara Blakely and husband entrepreneur Jesse Itzler.

“I think it is cool that someone who has no affiliation with us likes what we are doing in class,” said teacher Christopher Davis. “If you had a billion dollars, would you ever contact a high school woodshop for a project? Probably not. I don’t know if it has ever happened before - but in two straight years, that probably has never happened.”

For students, the project requires them to develop marketing skills, essential trade skills for a growing recreational industry, creativity and teamwork.

“We worked together so hard and all had different qualities we brought to the project,” said graduate Rosalina Cholewa, who was part of an all-girls team that built a board for Branson last year. “We were really efficient, some of us were good at using the saws and some were great at using epoxy and gluing all the pieces together. We worked as a team and needed each other to create this masterpiece.”

Graduate Antonia Nunnery, who also worked on the Branson board, agreed.

“What we learned over the period of time working on the board was incomparable to any other learning experience I had my senior year,” said Nunnery.

What has brought attention to the students is that they have a unique woodworking process that is used by only a handful of builders internationally.

“These boards are unique because they are com-

pletely custom and hollow,” Davis said. “We do not use any foam on the insides of the board. Materials are handpicked to match the desired design. The boards are also Eco-Friendly - they will never end up in a landfill like foam boards.”

The designs are based on the work of Jason Thelen and his Little Bay Boards business in Petosky. Thelen has become a mentor to students in the program.

Davis said the students research the individuals making the request, find out more about their interests, create a design, and then begin the process of building the board to specific design specifications.

“I loved that our project was so unique, and it was something you don’t normally hear about,” Nunnery said. “It was huge and took months of work in and outside of school.”

Now in its third year, Davis said the woodworking program has built about 20 boards based on requests or for family members of students. Materials for the boards have been largely donated or are purchased by families.

This summer, the board was delivered to its first celebrity request, HGTV star Petrillo. The boards for Branson and Smart and Oosterhouse are in the process of being delivered, and students will work this year on the paddle board for Blakely and Itzler.

“This board is absolutely gorgeous,” Petrillo said in a video message to students. “I don’t even want to put it in the water because it is so pretty. It belongs on a wall somewhere – but I’m still going to put it in the water.”

Davis said the international interest has had an impact on his students’ work.

“The reason I decided to build boards for these people is to help drive student motivation,” he said. “When the students find out that they are building a board for one of these people, they are all in and give it everything they have to make a nice project.”

Bob Mills



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