

Whidbey Island Woodworkers Guild
October 2006

Editors note: due to several factors beyond the control of the editor (change in personnel, people going or are out of town, and computer crashes) this edition of the monthly newsletter has reverted to straight text. Hopefully the next edition will look a lot better and contain all the information you are used to seeing.

-BJ

WIWG October 7, 2006 Meeting

by Bruce Schwager

Brad Rice is a highly skilled boat builder who has now set up shop in an old barn in Freeland. He has built everything from sailing skiffs to mahogany racing runabouts and cruising sailboats in his 30-plus years working on boats. Brad's runabout was a hit in the Cash Store lobby during our recent gallery show. He has been featured in the September/October 2006 Wooden Boat magazine. Brad led the team that restored the structural integrity (reframing and replanking) of the 75 year old R-Boat class racing sailboat, PIRATE. The total restoration took six years and is in the Center for Wooden Boats fleet on Seattle's Lake Union. The boat was designed in 1925 by the legendary Ted Geary and built at Lake Union Dry Dock. She is now moored less than a half mile from where she was born.

The meeting will start at 7:00pm in the barn at 4785 East Harbor Road, two miles north of Freeland on the right (east) side. His phone is (360) 331-1109 and the website is <http://www.theboatwright.com/> .

The next meeting will be **on November 2, 2006** in **John Shinneman's** new shop. John has tried to put all the design details he can think of (and afford) into his new place and has invited us to see how it all came together. John's dry kiln has been working away since he moved and will discuss the art of srying wood. More information will be in the next newsletter.

The **December meeting** will again be our famous and fabulouse **Pot Luck Party**. Details will be in the next newsletter. You still have tiume to get your dues paid and submit you member information form. The forms will be used to draw the winner of a Lie Nielson block plane. You have until November 2nd to be in the drawing.

Our Thank to Jim Bertram

by Bob Johnson

Septembers meeting at Jim Bertram's shop in Coupeville was attended by about twenty some members who were treated to a well organized and presented education on Renaissance recorders. We were especially impressed with the tooling Jim has developed. Special bits for boring the hole through the maple body of the recorder, reamers to correctly size the bore, and then special cutters made to fabricate the delicate mouth piece. The mechanical work is followed by the voicing of the instrument. Although Jim demonstrated the difference "before and after", too many of us have been standing too close to screaming router and saws to be able to tell the difference. After voicing, the last step is finishing and Jim uses a time honored Renaissance process, but I can't tell you here in writing what he uses. You had to be there to be included in the secret; sorry.

Our thanks again to Jim for hosting a wonderful evening that open our eyes to a whole new world in woodworking.

Dear Guild Dustheads,

by Rob Hetler

Out of town or out to lunch? Currently I am in St Paul Minnesota in the Ramsey County Court House City Hall, so that would be out of town. Lunch, I hope, is later. Just finished a two hour tour of this 1930's Deco building. My sister-in-law, Lee, works here. She invited Debbie, another county employee who gives building tours to join us.

Every floor uses a different wood for the paneled walls, all book matched veneers with spectacular deco moldings and brass hardware to match the style. From Brazilian Rosewood, to Madagascar Ebony, to Eastern Walnut, to Andaman Paduk; some 23 woods were used for furniture, paneling, and molding. They identified one floor as Australian Ironwood, but it looked like Koa. In saying so, Debbie told me they had just had it identified, as Blackwood, but she was not sure. Intruding, as usual for me. The marble was all book matched as well -very amazing. I even had a chance to look in the mayors' cabinets to see how they were made. It was interesting to see shelf pins holding the interior shelves, just like we do now. Nice to know not everything is new.

Yesterday, with my brother Joel, We toured two factories in my current quest to find the right wide belt sander. We stopped at the Timesaver facility and spoke with Warren Willkins about the Speedsander. Their \$7500 "portable" (at 36"x 60") machine has been on the market for about three years. It was very attractive in its low cost and small footprint. I have some reservations about its ability to withstand long term shop abuse. Mostly, it looked very well made. Then he took

to see some of the other sanders, the largest topping out at \$250,000. I offered to trade my house with five acres, but then I would have had to tell my wife what I was up to, so I retracted. Plus we got free Timesaver carpenters pencils. I bet if you bought the \$250,000 version you could pick up a whole box!

Then we moved on to the Safety Speed Cut factory. Their offering is American made right there in Anoka, MN. So I was able to see some sanders in process ob being assembled. They were very well built by American citizens with American training making American dollars to spend in the American economy. I knew something like this would happen; I'm on a bit of a favorite rant against buying equipment made out of country. I guess the first time I felt angst about the global economy was back in the seventies when I was trying to make a living as a potter and the Japanese were selling coffee cups for a buck. I couldn't sell one for less than ten and still make ends meet. Oh well, that direction turned to mud. Soon we will all be buying Chinese cabinetry sold by Ikea. What are you going to do?

I tried Chinese plywood for a while, but the smell of formaldehyde was so intense, the veneers kept peeling off, and the finish was not durable. So after twenty or so sheets, I stopped using it. Even at half the price of American made plywood, it was not worth it. As for imported equipment, like from Grizzly; well...., they have only a bad reputation. I liked being able to see what I might buy and talk to the craftsman who builds it. There pricing seemed very competitive. Warren was a good salesman, but I liked Safety's product better. We will see which I buy. Safety's 36" wide belt sander was \$9000, before shipping, bells and whistles. Their 43" inch looked good too, even at \$12,500. There we go...the prices just jump up and up (please don't tell my wife).

OK folks, I am stealing computer time from Ramsey County, so I will sign off now. My flight to Boston is in a couple of hours and I want to see a show of the American Wood Turners Association before I head to the airport. Plus this all makes this trip tax deductible!

May your chisels be sharp and your shavings long.

Rob Hetler Cabinetmaker
from out on the road (but returning soon to Greenbank)

WIWG Steering Committee Report *by Bob Johnson*

The Steering Committee met at Rob's on September 18th with Rob, Randy, Karl, John, and Bob attending.

A recap of the Gallery Show took up most of the conversation. All in all, the show this year was a success; more visitors were there than last year, sales were better, and the quality of visitor interest was improved (they asked better questions and listened to the answers).

Next years Show is scheduled over the Labor Day weekend from Aug 30 to September 9, 2007. The Front Room was not available for the same dates next year that we had this August. John has tentatively booked us in for the same period for the next three years to be assured we will have a place for the show.

Possible ways to improve the show could include better planning, starting earlier, professional photography, and longer lead times to critical milestones. In effect the 2007 show planning should begin now. A number of ideas, goals, and suggestions we discussed. For example: Pieces to be included in the show would be completed by the end of May or early June to allow for a group session with a professional photography for consistency and quality. From the photos and participants bios, a real catalog could be written and printed ahead of the show for distribution. Having the work done early will allow for thoughtful setup and arrangements in the gallery. Better briefing of the docents might include ideas on how best to work with the gallery visitors in answering their questions, directing them to portfolios, taking their suggestions on improving the show, and collecting leads for future sales efforts. Incorporating a theme into the show could add visitor interest and an interesting challenge to the woodworkers. Thematic items, as incorporating a secret compartment, tell a story or a joke, show whimsy or humor, a three dimensional copy of a piece of furniture shown in a famous painting, more color and texture, incorporation of other materials into the wood works could all be considered. These and many other ideas could all help avoid the "look" that one visitor described the show as "having many shades of brown". A strong element could spark visitor's interest, but we do not intend to exclude from the show those choosing not to go with the theme, nor do we think it is beneficial or necessary at this point to jury entrants.

The Steering Committee wants to hear from show participant from all three years; what worked and what didn't, how well did the exposure work over time, how were your sales, and any other ideas or comments you have to make the show better. The mission of the show is to provide an inexpensive showcase for our members to display what they do. How is this best accomplished?

The Steering Committee (SC) is looking for new members to bring new ideas and fresh energy in directing the guild. Participation on the committee is open to any member and the number is not constrained. If you have ideas for ways to make the Guild more useful to you, more interesting, or more accessible, please contact Rob Hetler to find out when the next SC meeting will be held. The meeting is usually scheduled one to two weeks after the monthly meeting and takes about 2 hours.

Member of the Month: Bob Johnson

by Nancy Baggott

Because the person who was scheduled for October Member of the Month is out of town, one of the Steering Committee members suggested that the Newsletter editor, my husband, Bob be profiled instead. I agreed as I did not think it would take long to write something up. You see Bob has promised that just as soon as he gets what ever is his newest tool, he will be able to do all the projects he has promised. ..." if I could just get the latest new gadget I so desperately need". I'm still waiting for the dining room cabinets and the library shelves. Although I could have hired several readers of this newsletter to build them and still have money left over, his shop does keep him busy at home and out of Targey's or even worse, the Tyee here in Coupeville.

Bob is an engineer by training and disposition; no let me restate that; he is a @#\$%#-engineer! Parametric studies are a well know event in our lives; the alternation of one variable at a time to see the effect on the end results. I'm still awaiting some of the end results. Yes, we are living in our owner built dream home. Although the hose is still not 100%, it was time for us to move into the new home after three and a half years of building – mainly because I said it is time. The cabin was getting to be way too small. That was December 2003. I know I was supposed to hook up the low voltage wiring, but I was not happy with his sexist remark about "this is a delicate job for small hands,... and minds".

That is enough about the recent history. Bob is a woodworker, among his other interest; like sitting at his computer, gourmet cooking, blacksmithing, and anything else to do with large and rusty machinery. Bob is fond of telling people about his friend in Oregon who will not be a satisfied tool hound until the FAA air navigation charts show a perturbation in the magnetic declination when flying over his house. I could only wish the plies of tools and machinery would drive the Navy jets away when they practice touch and go landings over our house.

Bob was born in Chicago in 1943 to a postal supervisor father and school teacher mom. He has three younger sisters scattered across the US, and none display the same characteristics for tool collecting, detail orientation, and analysis-until-paralysis that their brother does. His grandfather came from Sweden in the 1880's and worked as a cabinet maker and finish trim carpenter on the mansions of the Chicago barons. Although Bob's dad was quite handy, could never be called a tool collector. Bob's mother did tell me once that she was very reluctant to ask either her husband or Bob to fix anything, as more often than not something else was destroyed in the process. The recessent tool-collector gene has shown up in Bob's nephew. Luckily he is an orthopedic surgeon and has the where-with-all for fine tools. And no, I don't let Bob go with fellow WIWG member Dick Schusler to the tool collector meetings.

Bob got his degree in Metallurgical Engineering in 1966 and went to work immediately to work for Boeing. That is how he got to Seattle. After two other wives, and two children from the first, Bob finally got his stuff together and found me. We have been married since in 1982 and Bob says “third time is the charm”. He had to build the shop after the house, even though it makes logical sense to do the shop first. Well, the shop is still not done, but it does have a lot of fancy (read expensive) machinery in there. I like to call Bob my Renaissance man; he knows a lot about many things and is interested in much more. He gets done about what any 16th century artisan would, but of course the average life span then was about 35.

He retired after 32 years at Boeing as a manager in Service Engineering and retired at 55 to build our home. While at Boeing, Bob had at least five careers: metallurgical engineer, service engineering, logistician, in-field representative and business manager. He says he enjoyed all of it and it went by all too quickly.

As far as woodworking, Bob has been a member of the Seattle Woodworkers Guild (not to be confused with the gallery in Pioneer Square) and was its president for several years in the 80's. When I look around at the house we built, I have to say I see a lot of his woodworking skill in a multitude of big and little details he built into the structure. He has made a number of small items for me as gifts over the years and I just wish he would stop building structures and focus on woodworking. Right now he is rebuilding a blacksmith shop and pouring a concrete foundation for a new 110 pound power hammer. A pair of his forged iron and copper lanterns that were built for the house was on display this last summer at the national blacksmiths conference. I just have to get him to mount them on the front wall of the house. One last good thing I can say about Bob is he is a great cook and I am not. He does most of the cooking and we share the prep and clean-up. He is an all around good deal for me, and not just for the cooking.

WIWG Steering Committee

- Rob Hetler, President. 222-3121, rhetler@hotmail.com
- Randy Scofield, Treasurer. 331-2395, scofield@whidbey.com
- Gary Leake, Secretary. 678-1347, gary.leake@att.net
- Bob Johnson, Newsletter Editor, 678-6480, woodewe@earthlink.net
- Bruce Schwager, Meeting Coordinator, 730-8165, schwager@whidbey.com
- John Shinneman, Show Chairman, 331-2782, johnshinneman@yahoo.com
- Karl Nielsen, Advisor. 675-2751, neilsenfinewoodworking@hotmail.com

DISCLAIMER: The Whidbey Island Woodworkers Guild, nor its hosts, cannot be held liable for any accidents or injuries sustained during the monthly gatherings, or any other Guild sponsored event. Please use caution when around tools and equipment.