

Siskiyou Woodcraft Guild



SHOP CHATS

Shop-Chats are our method of getting together during the year to see what other members are doing and how they go about it. Exploring other shops can often reveal ways to improve one's own shop. We try to find new locations and/or new members to have us over for a visit so that we have 'fresh' shops to tour. We hope to 'explore' your work, hear tool opinions, and tips for getting 'it' done right. Sharing snacks and stories allows us to learn more about our skilled members.

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9/18: Sat. 10:00am - noon
 At Matt Hunter's Ashland Post and Beam
 541-864-9336

This is a timber framing shop beyond (what's left of) Emigrant Lake. Don't go uphill on Hwy 66. Turn right a little bit after the 9 mile marker. Stay along the creek about a mile and look for a big modern industrial building with equipment and wood piles

10/02: Sat. 10:00am ~ noon
 At Mallory Hicklin's 'Odd Corner'
 541-955-8736

If you don't know him already, you'll meet a multi-talented, artistic, retired contractor. He's lately been making 'odd' pieces to sell at the Grants Pass Sat. market.

10/16: Sat. 10:00am ~ noon
 At Will Sears' country shop
 541-890-3018

Besides turning his green Madrone bowls from wood harvested on this property, Will has been making many improvements to his buildings and creek. He mentioned that a dug-out canoe project is a regular distraction.

Message from the President

Hi Wood Choppers:
 Hunting for the 'right' piece of wood...

We SWGers really like wood, right?! Whatever we decide to build needs to start by finding the wood to use. For one-of-a-kind projects this can become a big challenge. We always appreciate the quality and appropriate use of figured or vertical grain in any finished project. So finding those good sticks in your own wood pile or the lumber yard is a crucial step. We are often 'digging out' boards from the bottom of the stack just to see if they are useful. Are they too cracked, warped, cupped? Maybe some are too figured, straight, or way longer than you need? Perhaps those would be better used for other 'things'. It can take a while to 'winnow' through all your options as well as planning your cuts between some knots or around a cracks. This is what a dedicated woodworker does regularly to create quality products.

I recently built and delivered a table with a Black Walnut slab top that has two leg sets that are black, metal, and trapezoid. The clients already had 6 black Windsor chairs handmade for their dining area and liked the idea of an 'open' under-structure with the black & black match. While a bit eclectic, it looked OK in the end. We went online to Etsy to find and order the supports made by Base Metal Design up in the Puget Sound. An important feature was that we could select both height and top width inch by inch. They are painted (not powder-coated) and arrived efficiently in 2 weeks after the order. FYI: the two leg sets are 27" tall x 25" wide and cost about \$235 - with free shipping!

Although I had a few ideas of where to look for an appropriate slab I decided to ask the SWG if anyone had any Black Walnut close to the size we were aiming for - about 72" long and averaging 32-36" wide without too much variation and thick enough to flatten. I got quite a few suggestions: Oregon West Lumber (Eagle Point), Cooks Woods (Klamath Falls), Terramai (White City), a guy named Mike (Medford), Field's Home Center (Grants

Pass/Murphy), Beavertooth Oak (Medford), and from some personal inventories. I do know about Goby Walnut in Portland but I did hope to find something that wasn't too far away. First, I called around to see who had anything close to our sizing. Since Cooks has good photos on their website we spent some time comparing their selection. We also spent a morning visiting some of the other wood sources which proved interesting. We saw a range of material (mainly stacked), a backyard in Phoenix with a slabbed Black Walnut salvaged after the Alameda fire), a lumber mill, and other wood 'yards'.

Seeing what's-what from an untrained eye in varying conditions is not an easy thing. While it felt a bit overwhelming at times I had my tape measure and the clients to tell me if anything looked promising. In my preparation I had earlier previewed a slab stacked in the back at Beavertooth Oak. We went there and peaked at it from a rolling staircase. It was close to the desired size and had fairly calm natural edges as we hoped for. Later we had it brought down into the light for closer inspection. With the help of a block plane we were able to see the color range and to look for defects. We agreed that this was the one and paid the going price for such a 'stick' - a shocking \$28 bd. ft. price!

I will mention that I was recommended for this project by another SWG member named Julian Hamer. After many years and shows he has retired from the business side of woodworking. This is another good example of how our guild network can assist our members!

With Morgan Pierce's recommendation (another example of guild networking), I ordered an Amana RC-2267 which is a 3-wing carbide insert leveling bit for surfacing slabs. It has a diameter of 1-3/4" with a 1/2" shank. Using my skillsaw and handsaw, trimming the length close to final size was a big first step. I then setup the leveling 'cradle' for my home made router track system. It was also helpful to place temporary cardboard walls around this area as the chips do fly when the

cutting starts! From a 1/4 thickness I removed material from both sides to finish a tad over 2". Those are some pricy cutoffs and valueless bags full of 'wasted' wood.

Fortunately for me, Jens Sehm was in town and this slab was just under the 36" limit to pass through his big sander (once again, another example of guild networking!). The 60 grit took care of the slight variations left by my leveling method followed by some 100 grit passes to remove the deep scratching left by the 60 grit. To work the natural surfaces I removed the bark and started with a curved drawknife to keep the shapes and bumps while softening those details. One of my earliest tool purchases included a Japanese spokeshave made of oak with a curved bottom which has been overused and repaired. This tool did more refinement along the edges and left surfaces that needed very little hand sanding. Next I used a cabinet scraper on the top surface to remove all sanding tracks followed by a 1/2 sheet pad sander for the usual preparation sequence: 120-150-180-220-320 grits.

I am (mostly) a fan of the Daly's finishing products and I like to use their Sea-Fin Ship-N-Shore to saturate and seal my projects. While several coats can do well for many situations, I prefer a tougher topcoat for eating, spills, and wiping. So I tried Daly's water based satin Crystalfin for which I now have mixed feelings about. While it is quick drying and can be re-coated in just a few hours, this means that it starts getting tacky fairly quickly. It was difficult to go back over an area that had sat/set for a few minutes. Even though I used a wide foam brush there were slight streaks showing from the strokes. Since I was afraid to put a power tool to that surface I hand sanded between coats carefully using 220 and 320 grits followed by a nylon pad. Still, in just the right light and position, one can notice those stroke lines!

After all that I checked my storage shelf where I keep my finishes and noticed that I had an old can of oil based Daly's Floor-Fin. Maybe Floor-Fin would have been a better choice to begin with as it flows and levels better than the other. As usual it is always worthwhile to test and practice your finishing products and methods... hhhmmmm, where did I hear that before??? My kind clients are going to use the table 'as is' for several months to see if this problem settles down or becomes annoying. I promised to refinish the top if requested. Dang!!!

Stay sharp & work smart, - **Tom**

P.S. I'll soon email some photos of this wonderful slab so you can enjoy the colors. Yes, it's air dried.

FALL SHOW SCHEDULE

News Flash! Just In:

OSF says:

"..we've done some thinking about this and in the interests of curbing holiday spread of Covid as well as continuing to protect our employees, it seems very unlikely that we will be able to accommodate you this year. We're not likely to be able to make a final decision until around November 1 2021..."

Though having a show at OSF doesn't look promising we may want to consider various ways of connecting with our community: radio out-reach, window display, web-site gallery promotion, possibly a last minute 'flash-show", etc. I think the Steering Committee will get to help determine our best option(s)..... stay tuned!



EXTRA SHOP CHAT INFO

We expect that people will be required to wear a mask if they choose to visit a shop. It is also possible that we may cancel one just before these dates so keep an eye out for any guild email notices and website calendar updates. We hope that these can go forward - possibly using outdoor spaces and distancing for members to meet as safely as possible. Of course, if you are not feeling well or feel vulnerable then it's best not to come. We should skip the usual complimentary food/drink assortments.



By the way, if you ever forget the schedule for our various meetings, Jeff has included a month-by-month event calendar on our website. Go to the Event section, then click on Calendar!



OUR MISSION

The Siskiyou Woodcraft Guild is a regional association of woodworkers encouraging a wide range of skills, knowledge, and interests. Our mission is to offer fellowship by providing networking among our members. We value the principles and practices of fine woodworking by encouraging technical discussion and development. We promote an appreciation of quality workmanship to the general public by providing access to our products, experience, and design expertise through shows, classes, and other events.

2021 OFFICERS

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REMINDERS: Please send contact information updates to Herb Harris