

INTRODUCTION

The Guild is interested in trying to determine the level of interest members may have in participating in workshops held during weekdays during the upcoming year. They would be similar in some ways to the toymaking workshops Steve Hoffmann led for several years before the Covid pandemic.

The Guild has three main goals:

- 1) Increase the social interaction among members including the opportunity for new members to meet existing members
- 2) Share woodworking skills and knowledge
- 3) Create some interesting projects

We have given some initial thought to some different projects that might be undertaken; the possibility of having sessions in multiple locations in an effort to reduce travel distance; and the format of how the workshops might be conducted. Presented below is a brief discussion of these three items. We would very much like to receive your comments on what we have identified thus far and your suggestions on different types of projects and approaches to undertaking the workshops

THE PROJECTS

Thus far we have identified three different projects with different levels of woodworking skills that would be required.

The first group would involve making children's toys similar to the types of toys Steve Hoffmann made several years ago as charitable Christmas gifts. These could involve: 1) toy cars and trucks approximately 6-8 inches long; and/or animals on wheels 4-8 inches long that have moving arms, legs and tails. These would make interesting gifts for children and grandchildren. It would require the use of bandsaws, drill presses and, possibly, round over bits on a router, although edges could be filed or sanded in lieu of a router bit. It would probably involve a group purchase of wooden wheels and spindles, but wooden wheels could be cut on a bandsaw. Patterns would be made available to participants.

The second project we have considered is making larger cutting boards approximately 13" by 18" made from maple. What makes these boards interesting is the application of thin strips of wood in a wave pattern that run the full length of the cutting board. The strips of wood are made from purple heart, yellow heart, bubinga and/or walnut. Each strip is approximately 1' 8" thick and are applied in various combinations of one, two or three strips so the total thickness of an individual insert could range from 1/8th to 3/8^{ths} in width. The inserts also cross over one another, making for an interesting pattern. The edges of the cutting board are rounded over with a router and an insert is made on each end of the cutting board with a special router bit to make an insert to allow one's fingers to be inserted so as to pick up the cutting board. Making these boards requires a lot of time with a hand-held router as each 1/8 strip must be cut

individually all the way through the cutting board and then the two pieces of the cutting board and the colored strip must be glued back together and allowed to dry thoroughly before the next cut is made. It is not a project for the impatient woodworker.

The third proposed project would involve the construction of a shaker stool of approximately 15" by 15" and 18" tall. It would probably be made out of cherry wood and would include the application of a woven cloth seat. This is considered to be the most challenging of the three projects as it could involve a considerable amount of lathe work to construct the legs and multiple side pieces. Alternatively, if you would prefer to avoid hours at the lathe, it may be possible to purchase pieces of dowel that could be used for the legs and side pieces. This project will also require very accurate drilling of holes in the legs for the side pieces. Finally, it will require buying pieces of cloth to weave the seat itself.

WORKSHOP FORMAT

We are interested in your preference for how the workshops will be conducted. There are two possible approaches, both of which the Guild has employed in the past.

About nine years ago, then Guild president, Fritz Smith, led a group of about ten Guild members on a project that involved making a very attractive Federalist chair. The approach Fritz used involved a weekly meeting at his shop where Fritz led a discussion on that week's topic, demonstrated the woodworking technique or design consideration required and provided reference material on the subject matter. The participants would then return to their own shops and attempt to learn what Fritz had just discussed. They would then bring their own work to the following meeting for Fritz's review and comments and the process would then be repeated for the next component of the chair. The total amount of time this approach involved took about six months but it was a very effective teaching technique as the chairs came out extremely well and the participants learned a lot of new woodworking techniques.

This approach would probably work best for the cutting board and the foot stool, for different reasons. The cutting board requires making a cut with the router that results in three pieces having to be glued together and then waiting until the glue properly sets up. Such an approach may result in each meeting of the cutting board group being able to make one insert per meeting. The foot stool may require a lot of time on a lathe and would limit the number of turned pieces that could be completed at any single meeting.

It must be noted, however, that the reason this technique worked so well was that Fritz was a graduate of North Bennett Steet School and that was the approach which was used there. Unfortunately, we do not have any North Bennett Street grads who are available to lead the workshops we are considering, so it will be important for participants to manage their expectations.

A second approach would involve what Steve Hoffmann used for his toy making efforts. Under this approach, individuals would show up at Steve's shop, receive the day's instructions on

what was to be done that day, and then wait until the tool they required was available for them to use. Some of the participants took things home with them and worked on them in their shop if they had the required tool available to them.

MEETING LOCATION

There are several issues to consider regarding the location of the meeting(s). The first has to do with driving distances Is attendance likely to be impacted by how far a member has to drive to reach a location? The second has to do with the size of the group attending any meeting. Would members prefer a smaller meeting size wit the possibility of getting more attention and information or a larger meeting with the opportunity to interact with more people?

SUMMARY

We would like to hear back from you with your thoughts and suggestions regarding the following

- 1) Does an in-person meeting appeal to you or are Covid concerns still too much of an issue?
- 2) Do you have any interest in the three currently proposed projects and do you have any suggestions for other projects?
- 3) Which meeting format do you prefer: build the project at the site of the meeting or obtain some information/instruction and work on it at your own shop?
- 4) What would you prefer for a meeting location: nearby with shorter driving distance; larger group for more social interaction, smaller group for more instruction?

Send your thoughts to Jeff Clunie and/or Steve Hoffmann.