

Halley's Comet

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Andrew Davis

What do Halley's Comet and woodworking have in common you might ask? The answer is periodicity. While the comet famously reappears every 86 years, woodworking articles not-famously reappear every 86 weeks. This periodicity is evident to subscribers who pay attention. Or perhaps to any woodworker conducting an on-line search today who finds exactly the right magazine article to address his need, but it is dated September 2007.

After a thorough search in both the Library of Congress and the Library of Google, I have concluded that there are actually just 15 woodworking articles in the world. Consider them classics. These 15 are simply repeated in modified form every few years in the half a dozen trade journals we all know and love.

The 15 woodworking gospels, in descending order of popularity, are:

1. Making dovetails – pins first
2. Building cabinets that won't fall apart or rack
3. Know your glues
4. Finishes and finishing
5. Making and fitting drawers and doors
6. Jigs and fixtures you simply must have
7. Joinery secrets
8. Veneering for fun and profit
9. Building desks, tables, and/or benches (variations on a theme)
10. Carving
11. Turning a bowl, pen, leg, or pencil
12. Sharpening materials and techniques
13. Building a chair
14. Dust collecting and shop safety
15. Making dovetails – tails first

Indeed, it is true: what goes around comes around!