

# Northwest Corner Woodworkers Association

November, 2003

## **Next Meeting: Our November Meeting is the Annual Show!**

**November 8&9 2003 La Conner Garden Club, La Conner, WA.**

**From I-5 take exit 230, turn left onto WA-20, turn left onto Whitney La Conner, Whitney La Conner becomes Morris St., turn left on 2nd and go about 4 blocks, the Garden Club is on the right. Look for a white building, across from the Gaches Mansion.**

### **Memorium**

Gerald (Gerry) Rettig passed away in September after a long battle with brain cancer. You may share your thoughts and memories of Gerald in the on-line memorial guest book at <http://www.jonesmoles.com>

October 12, 2003

### **Prez Letter – October 2003**

One of life's wonders, and one of my personal thrills, is to witness the work of someone skilled in their craft who thoroughly enjoys what they are creating. Such was my enjoyment at our last meeting when Vern Tator took the stage to engage us in the wonderment and fine art of working with laminates. My first personal observation was that Vern had, indeed, done this work many times before and has done a lot of it. My second observation was that he was totally committed to teaching, to engaging the membership in the work he so much enjoyed and to share his knowledge and experiences without reservation. Thank you Vern. I learned from you and I'm certain the membership shares my

view.

Art's Alive is getting' close, my friends. I found out last night that a birdhouse can be built in an hour, or it can take more than a day, depending on the design, the care you give it, and the complexity of the construction. Bird feeders can be as simple or as complex as you choose. The point is, LET THE COMPETITION BEGIN!! Let's have fun doing it, and let's enjoy the work of students who will be helped by our efforts. So dig down. Cough up. Spit it out! Let's be sure to submit your birdhouse and/or bird feeder entries to Phil Choquette or Jay Geisel (or deliver them to the Garden Club in La-Conner on Friday evening, November 7, 2003 before 7:00pm).

We're nearing that time when new officers will be elected for the next calendar year. Please accept this invitation from myself, and from all of the officers of the club, to call us if you are interested in becoming an officer and/or committee member for the next year. The Club's success depends on your participation and nothing helps more than an infusion of new blood into the process. Our

nominating committee will be calling members to determine their interest in accepting responsibility. Please answer with a resounding "YES" because, without you, the membership may have to look at our ugly faces for another year. Now, that should be enough to cause a revolution!!!

Finally, and as usual, your officers and committee chairs will meet at the Farmhouse Restaurant on Highway 20 on Wednesday, November 19, 2003 at 7:00pm to discuss the Club's business. Any member is welcome to attend. Let us know if you are coming so we can make certain there will a chair for you.

Nick

### **Minutes of Meeting 7 October 2003**

The October meeting on Camano Island drew a fine audience, and Nick Van's beautiful hilltop workshop proved a fit setting for Vern Tator's elaborate laminates' program. As is his custom, Nick opened the meeting promptly at 7 pm. Announcements and discussions regarding the November 7 *Arts Alive* set-up, participation and exhibition; the awards competition in making bird houses and feeders for that event; and the bus trip to the National Woodworking Show at the Tacoma Dome were the main subjects of the short business session.

Dave Blair exhibited his latest bowl turned from Koa, a Hawaiian Island exotic wood that is no longer exported. His finish of choice was ProFin. White Oak, the *Wood-of-the-Month* topic, was presented by Val Mat-

thews, while the use of hide glue was the subject of Phil Choquette's *Tip-of-the-Month* discussion.

Close-grained, very hard, White Oak is a popular choice today for manufacturers of indoor and outdoor furniture. Grown in the Appalachian region, White Oak trees typically are 150 feet tall at harvest, ranging 3 to 4 feet in diameter with a density of 47 pounds per square foot. The quarter-sawn lumber is plentiful and a little more expensive than Red Oak. Woodworkers select White Oak for its appearance and strength when making cabinets and other furniture, but Val cautioned, "The wood is hard and tough on your tools. You need sharp carbide blades and be aware that this oak has a tendency to splinter."

Choquette, experienced in refinishing and an owner of a Whidby Island furniture restoration shop, decries the declining use of hide glues in today's woodworking practices. "Hide glues do not react with finishes," he stated. "They don't show up as a blemish on finishes like other glues do." Other benefits: a few drops of aniline dye can be added to the glue to give it the coloration of a water-based stain finish, and furniture repairs are made easier when these glued joints can be disassembled without damaging the wood. Phil says he keeps his glue warm and workable at 140 degrees by using the heating base of an old coffee maker.

Treasurer Ed Pysher reported a healthy balance of \$1,700 and promptly raised a few more bucks with a 50-50 raffle.

Jay Geisel,  
Secretary

## **Tator Teaches Laminates 101**

We identify ourselves as woodworkers because it's a short, convenient term for what we like, and have the abilities, to do. But the retirees and hobbyists among us spend only a relatively small part of their time in the shop and don't clearly understand the hours-packed, daily grind that our professional comrades face. Yet here they are, taking time out to attend our meetings and take a role in NCWA-sponsored events. Because they are good at what they do, and they do make their living at it, these contributions to our Club border on humanitarian. The professionals have little to absorb from the rest of us; in truth they don't need us; they could be spending those hours on profitable personal pursuits.

So it was both a pleasure and an opportunity to attend another great presentation by one of our professional members at Nick Van's Camano Island home workshop the other night. Nick claimed it to be the "highlight program of the year."

Vern Tator has spent a lifetime working with, and profiting from, laminates. He has laid miles of counter and cabinet tops in that time, and for us he drew a clear picture of what to do and not to do. Vern is a very good teacher. He explains and demonstrates in patient detail, answers your questions and concerns, and describes with humor some of his own early pitfalls. He brought to the meeting several hundred pounds of tools, jigs, and mate-

rials from which he devised a skillful "here's what you do" performance that was much appreciated by his audience. Here, in summary, are a few of Vern's observations and techniques:

MDF and industrial particleboard are preferred and recommended as substrates; plywood can delaminate. The burr that results from cutting laminates is rough and ragged and should be removed with bastard or plastics-working files. Laminates are cut on a table saw or with a router using carbide-tipped blades and bits; cuts are made from the face (no snapping). When cut from the back you get a "jagged mess." Vern sometimes resorts to tin snips to cut curves and tight corners.

Vern discussed core lines, how to handle them, and a product he identified as Color-Core. He told us to be aware that old laminates might be difficult, or impossible, to color-match with later production runs and suggested that we save scrap or excess material for possible repairs later. He added that the old stuff is paint-able with a roller.

Tator demonstrated the squaring tool he uses to cut straight edges for matching, aligning, and joining pieces of laminate with a tight seam. With a special router tool he made four dado vee cuts on a single piece of laminate using a box or open drawer as a template for his router. He then broke out the corner squares and bent the four sides up to complete the lamination. The cuts were slightly less deep than the thickness of the laminate and were true 45-degree angles that allowed the material to be folded to form perfectly square corners. Quick and neat.

Vern prefers to use water-based contact cement, for its less obnoxious odors. He demonstrated how he uses slats from a Venetian blind as an aid in gluing a panel to its substrate. Of course we've all been told to use strips of wood or dowels. Vern prefers the metal slats. Single ones are placed curved side up at each end of the substrate and two are placed side by side in the middle. Other singles are spaced about 24 inches apart as needed to support the laminate and keep the cured cement from making premature contact with the substrate. When it's time to bring the two surfaces together, Vern removes the outer slats first and then the other singles, removing the doubled slats last. He pressure rolls the sheet down working from center outward. If the double blinds support a seam, their removal adds pressure along the edges to force a tighter closed seam.

*Formica*, a common trademark name, was developed years ago to replace mica in circuit boards. The 4- by 8-foot laminate panel is formed from nine sheets of paper glued and bonded together under pressures of 1400 psi. Solid surface materials such as *Corian* and *Avonite* are also popular for countertops and are available in a thickness of ¼- and ½-inch. Although similar in appearance, these materials should not be mixed, he cautioned.

We are fortunate to have so many skilled professionals available and willing to share the knowledge, techniques and shortcuts that keep them secure in their businesses. Rick, Gary, Val, Phil, another Vern, and others have kept members of this organization acquainted

with trade and insider information, knowledge that advances and improves our workmanship and teaches us techniques that would otherwise be unavailable. More than that, they have a genuine interest in guiding the less experienced and have put unstinting effort into their generous, voluntary teaching process. We look to our professional members as counselors who lead and guide; they are the rudder of our organization.

Jay Geisel,  
Secretary

### **Tomovick Wins National Attention**

We all know the quality woodwork that Larry Tomovick consistently creates in his Anacortes workshop. Now the nation does too. Larry was awarded the Gold Medal for woodworking excellence at the recent National Veterans Creative Arts Festival in Oklahoma City.

Larry received an all-expense, four-day trip to Oklahoma for the presentation earlier this month. He won for an oval contemporary end table that he designed, handcrafted, and introduced at our 2002 *Arts Alive* woodworking show in the Garden Club. The small table is constructed of Western walnut and birdseye maple, a companion piece to the larger coffee table that he also created.

The festival, which attracted more than 3,000 entrants, is sponsored by the Department of Veteran Affairs, the American Legion Auxiliary, and Help Hospitalized Veterans and has been held in various cities for the past 15

years. The event honors veterans who display creative artistic abilities; it was recently expanded to include music and drama. If the table is returned in time for this year's *Arts Alive*, Larry has consented to exhibit it again.

**The People on the Bus  
Went Downtown . . .  
It Was A Great Show**

Eleven tired bodies returned home from the National Woodworking Show at five o'clock on the 19<sup>th</sup>, happy with this year's presentation and the multiple demonstrations given by the big-name tool manufacturers. We camped in the Tacoma Dome for more than five hours and mingled with the Sunday crowd on hand for the final day's events. The initial urge to buy was great, but many of us resisted until we had made the circuit to see what other sellers were offering. We didn't want to peak too early and have to carry our loot around for several hours.

Of course we left a big paper trail trying to win one of the tool drawings offered, and we stood enthralled by the booths where slick demonstrators showed the latest innovations in woodworking products. The big tool companies, DeWalt, Jet, Makita, Laguna, Porter Cable, Freud, Delta and others had multiple demonstrators working around the clock showing the efficiency of their blades as well as the machinery. Milling wood, making joints, texturing wood on the lathe, cabinet-making secrets. . . it was all here. The place reeked with *education*. And the competition for our attention was fierce.

One of the hottest new devices was the GrrRipper, an intelligent pushing tool to keep your fingers safe while at the saw and router table. More than that, though, it's a versatile tool that allows you to rip wood down to 1/4-inch in cross-section. Its uses are so numerous that we were told that a 90-minute instructional video would be ready to ship soon. Of course, I had to have the tool, as did many of my companions.

We re-boarded our bus at 3 o'clock and hauled several large, heavy machines home in the cargo bay below our coach seats. All agreed they had a good time, albeit being a little lighter in the wallet.

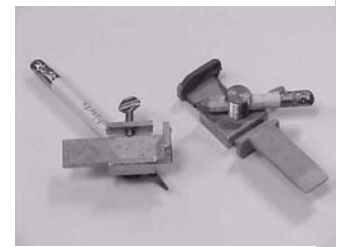
Jay Geisel, Tours

**Jake Strauss**

Kiln dried NW Washington hardwood  
lumber. (Sales by appointment only)  
6389 North Star Rd.  
Ferndale, WA 98248  
(360)384-3948



**Photos of a real pro demonstrating his craft**



**Left a Formica trimming "guillotine".  
Right a pair of scribes Vern uses to  
transfer profiles.**



**Bowl of Koa by  
Dave Blair.**



**A group of "old farts" checking out bird  
houses for the President's Challenge.**

The NCWA was formed to promote high standards in woodworking, woodworking education, and show casing local woodworking. The NCWA is open to all interested woodworkers.. Dues are 30 per year, payable to NCWA, 5268 Island View Way Bow, WA. 98232. Newsletter submissions are welcomed and are due by the 18th of the month to NCWA Newsletter, 925 South Hills Dr. Bellingham, WA., 98229. or call (360) 734-9473, or Email, [tc1376gp@aol.com](mailto:tc1376gp@aol.com). Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00 P.M. Location is announced in the newsletter .

### 2003 Officers and Committee Chairs:

President	Nick Van	(360) 387-4174	Education:	Val Matthews
VP	Rick Anderson	(360)-398-158	Public shows/exhibits:	Phil Choquette
Sec.	Jay Geisel	(360) 466-3908	Club Projects	Gary Holloman
Treas.	Ed Pysher	(360) 766-0136	Historian	Ray McInnes
Library	Tom Chartier	(360) 734-9473	Roster	Larry Tomovick
Programs	Bob Doop	(360) 293-4522	Membership cards	Vern Tator
Editor	Tom Chartier	(360) 734-9473		

**NCWA Newsletter**  
 925 South Hills Dr  
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