

WOODWORKERS



of Southwest Michigan

<http://www.woodguild.org> April 2018

Next meeting:

April 10, 2017 @ 7:00pm

Rick Hale
107 W Allen St,
Kalamazoo

Go north of Mosel on Pitcher st., & turn left on Allen. We are the first building on the right.

Agenda: Rick Hale is an artist & clockmaker based in Kalamazoo, Michigan. His work attempts to explore & challenge the way people feel the passage of time in the post-industrial era.
www.clockwright.com



The March meeting was held at Al's shop and featured Dale Smith from Dales' Woodworking and also from Woodcraft. Dale teaches many classes at Woodcraft and his two favorites to teach and to do are scroll sawing and wood burning.

There is a wide variety of scroll saws on the market today. At the low end is something like the harbor freight version, which might cost around \$80, less if you catch it on sale with a coupon. At the high end are saw made by Hawk, Hegner, or RBI which can cost \$1200-\$1400. Dale brought his personal Excalibur 16" scroll saw to use for the presentation. While he has several saws, including some more expensive ones, The Excalibur is his favorite. The Excalibur saws went out of production for a time but are being manufactured again. Woodcraft sells them under the King Industrial brand name for \$600. DeWalt also has a very good saw made at the same plant in Taiwan. The Excalibur/King/Dewalt style of saw has a double arm linkage, so instead of the entire arm stroking up and down as in typical older or cheaper saws, there are two rods inside the each of the upper and lower arms that move back and forth, causing the head on the front of the arm to pivot up and down around a bearing. This leads to an elliptical blade motion and much less vibration. Less vibration results in more control, a smoother cut, and better woodworking. While there are several saws available in the \$200 price range, Dale would recommend waiting until you can hit the \$600 saws – your work will be better and you will enjoy it more.

The right blade helps you do good work, and minimizes any sanding. Regarding blades, there are two styles. The cheaper saws rely on blades with pins in the end. These seem more prone to breakage and require a larger pilot hole in your workpiece to push the blade through for interior cuts. The other style is a flat strip with no pin. Blades are generally very cheap, with a dozen costing in the \$4-5 range. Blades come in sizes from 000 (thin) to 9 (wide). Dale was using a #3 blade for the evening's demo. Spiral blades are available and allow the user to cut in any direction, but are difficult to cut straight or follow a line with. Spiral blades are good for very tiny fretwork or when the workpiece is too large to turn inside the throat of the saw.

Dale's first project of the night was 3D or compound cut from a small block of wood, and he used spray adhesive to attach a pattern to two adjacent sides. These sides would become offcuts. If you are putting a pattern onto something that will be a finished face of your project, a layer of painters tape or packing tape is recommended before the spray adhesive and pattern are applied to make removing the pattern easier. Packing tape also has the benefit of reducing friction on the blade and is a tip to help reduce burn in woods like cherry. Dale grabbed a head mounted magnifier to make it easier to see (a low magnification level is best). He used a 1/16" bit to drill a few holes through the block that allowed him to thread the blade through and easily make interior cuts. The cam lever and clamping system on the Excalibur saw made it quick and easy to release the blade, drop the block over the blade (through the starter hole) and reclamp the blade. Following the pattern, Dale removed several pieces from the first face. He taped the large offcut back to it and rotated the piece 90 degrees to an adjacent face to make the cuts on the other side of the pattern. When all of the offcuts were removed, he revealed a 3D wooden bow like you might find on top of a Christmas present.

Dale's second demonstration was a scroll saw inlay, putting the state of Michigan into a piece of wood approximately the size of a coaster. The process started with $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick pieces of Baltic birch and walnut taped together. This was done with two sets of wood. The first was scrap for setup, and the second was our actual workpiece, so it also had a pattern attached on top. The theory is to set the blade at an angle so that when both pieces are cut at the same time the cut-out from the top piece is removed, the piece cut from the bottom will come up, fill the hole with no gap, and be flush with the top of the top piece. The exact angle isn't important as it varies with blade and wood thickness, but a few trials are needed to get the adjustment just right. Dale started by tilting the saw about 2.5 degrees to the side and made a tear shaped test cut. The direction you turn your workpiece matters relative to the direction of the blade tilt. If the bottom plug passes through the top hole completely, you turned the piece the wrong direction while cutting. If it gets stuck but stands proud of the top piece, you need to increase the angle of blade tilt. It took a few tries to get the angle dialed in and then we were ready for the real piece.

A pilot hole was drilled to start the blade, and since he had walnut colored wood filler (he recommends Timber mate), the hole went on the side of the line that would be walnut in the finished piece. Dale then carefully scrolled around the outline of the Michigan coastline, although some liberties were taken in the interest of time – sorry Petoskey. At the end of the cut the blade was unclamped & pulled back through the starter hole. The tape was removed and Dale was left with a piece of birch (top piece) that had a Michigan shaped hole and a piece of walnut that perfectly filled it.

Three last tips:

- 1) Cutting 1/8" material is hard because there isn't enough resistance. If thicker material won't work for your project, stack up an extra layer and cut two or more at the same time. One nice benefit of scroll sawn Christmas projects is the ability to laminate multiple layers and cut them all at once.
- 2) Titebond quick and thick is great for intarsia.
- 3) www.stevegood.com has a bunch of free patterns available

Dale also shared some ideas of scroll saw projects and examples of his own work (if you've been to Woodcraft in Grand Rapids you might recognize some).

Chess pieces, ornaments, coasters, table decorations (interlocking Christmas tree), keepsake box lids, layered decorations with colored backers, intarsia (motorcycle and owl), relief cutting (see picture of the 3D cross), segmentation (duck), bowls, overlay, photo Sculpture

Many thanks to Dale for his presentation and special thanks to Matt Erdmann for taking excellent notes at the March meeting.

Mike Cline has resigned as club treasurer and Website coordinator after many hours and years of club service. We would like to thank him for his dedication and contributions! Ted Maxon has stepped up to replace Mike as Club Treasurer, and Don Smith will be filling in with the Website. Many thanks to both of these members for their willingness to help make this a professional and well-run organization!!

Woodworkers Guild of S.W.

Michigan

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The Woodworks Guild of South West Michigan is a group of hobbyist and professional woodworkers of diverse woodworking interests that meet monthly to share knowledge and craftsmanship skills that serve the many facets of woodworking.

Meetings are held second Tuesday of each month from September through May. Meeting time is 7:00pm at a local shop or location of interest.

Annual membership dues are \$25/year.

Find us on the web at www.woodguild.org



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