



# Woodworkers Guild



of

Southwestern Michigan – <http://www.woodguild.org> February 2014

## Next Meeting

### Location

**February 11th, 2014 7:00pm**

**Al Collison's Shop at  
10292 Douglas Ave.**

Take Douglas North to Cooper, it is 2 ½ miles North of Cooper, on the right (East) side. Or you can take 131 to D ave East to Douglas and turn left, (North). Al will have an orange cone and flashing light out to get your attention.

Agenda: Doug Berch – Musician and Appalachian Mountain Dulcimer maker will be discussing and demonstrating dulcimer construction techniques. Check out [www.dougberch.com](http://www.dougberch.com)



The January meeting was held at Dennis Dahl's Homestead Cabinetry and Furniture downtown Kalamazoo. Dennis opened up the meeting with some brief family history and where the business is today. His grandparents immigrated to the United States from Oslo Norway. He has been at the Parks Trade Center location for 17 years. His business has survived through the roughest of times and is now enjoying a record year. Last year they built 22 kitchens averaging 28 cabinets plus a selection of furniture. The business has had clients as far away as Florida, but typically services a 3-4 hour radius of Kalamazoo. Dennis began walking us through the process of building a cabinet all the while imparting precious pearls of wisdom from 24 years of cabinet making. He started by assembling a base cabinet. This cabinet had one door and four drawers. It would eventually be disassembled, painted and sold to a client. The plans are drawn up by an in-house designer. Cabinet construction begins with the face frame first. The face frame had been cut and assembled prior to our visit.

Editors Note: This message did not make it into the January Newsletter: President Bill Crown delivered over 200 wooden toys and 40 jewelry boxes for Christmas gifts to children who attended the Christmas parties at the Portage Community Center and the Gospel Mission. Many thanks to all of you who generously gave of you time, talents, and scrap bins to make this possible!

The majority of the cabinet parts had also been precut prior to our visit as well. For a typical cabinet the sides are cut 30 1/2" tall x 23 1/2" deep. This allows for six side panels to be cut from a single sheet of plywood. The frame itself was fastened together with pocket screws and had grooves along each stile to accept a dado from the cabinet sides and center divider. The face frame will extend slightly beyond the edge of the side to allow for fit of adjoining cabinets or wall.



Dennis attached the sides to the frame using pocket screws. To prevent the screws from splitting the maple frame he pre-drills the screw hole. How does one pre-drill for a pocket screw? Dennis found six inch long 3/32" drills, know as aircraft drills and modified a stop to just fit into the pocket hole. Dennis buys these drills from Fuller Countersink Company. Gary Doyle informed us that Menards now carries' a few sizes of air craft drills. The two back braces were cut to fit between the sides and center panel. With the case complete Dennis went about adding the base. The base is added to give a toe kick 4" tall x 3" deep.



Now that the cabinet was complete, Dennis moved on to adding the drawer slides. Over the years Dennis has tried all types of drawer slides and has yet to find a slide better than the Blum Tandem Mount. These slides provide the easiest pull to overcome the self-closing inertia and offer the maximum adjustability. They are known as under mounts, thus mounted under the drawer and are completely out of sight. Dennis purchases them in six pair bulk containers. The two piece slide is full extension and rated for 110 LBS. He has developed a system of installation such that one pair can be installed in less than a couple of minutes.

To begin with the drawers boxes must be built with this type of slide in mind. For the 23 1/2" deep cabinet, a 21" slide is the maximum length that will fit. The drawer box must be exactly 21" in length to work and is 5/8" narrower and 3/4" shorter than the opening it is intended to fit in. The drawer bottom must be recessed up 1/2" from the bottom edge and notched at the back for the slide. A hole must also be drilled for a tab in the slide and two clip connectors added to the front. A jig can be purchased from Blum to aid in locating and drilling the holes. Being a two piece slide, one part will attach to the drawer bottom. The other piece is mounted to the cabinet side. This slide piece sits 1/8" back from the face of the face frame at a height just slightly above the drawer opening. Some filler strips are added inside the cabinet to bring the slide flush with the face frame stiles. Dennis demonstrated that it is possible to plane small strips of plywood to create the filler strips.







A temporary plywood spacer is used to get both sides and filler strips perfectly even with each other. The slide comes with several mounting holes. Dennis uses a self centering Vix bit to drill holes for the mounting screws. Even with all the attention to detail in mounting the slides, they are very forgiving. The orange clip connector allows for easy vertical and side to side adjustment by turning the grey thumb wheel. The back of the drawer slide also allows for adjustment to get a smooth motion and perfect fit. A premium slide like this does command a higher cost, but as craftsmen and craftswomen, we should strive to build the best and install the best hardware that is available to us. For Dennis, the cost can easily be offset by quality, time and speed.

The final task is to add a head to the drawer box. A special double stick tape from 3M that is about 1/16" thick is used to temporarily hold the head in place. Screws are then added to permanently affix the drawer head, and the tape virtually disappears under compression.

With the time remaining, Dennis showed us another Blum product he uses to attach cabinet doors to a face frame. The product is the Blum Quick Clip hinge. A recess hole is drilled into the door to accept the hinge cup. No fastener is needed. A clip is then closed and the cup is now attached to the recess hole. The hinges come integrated with an inertia soft close feature. Typically the top clip has the soft close feature while the bottom hinge is a standard spring loaded self close. The face frame side is fastened with the screws.



When adjusting these hinges, the adjustment screws appear to be typical Phillips. Be careful, they are actually an European standard know as Posi-drive. It would be easy to damage and strip the head with a Phillips screw driver.

Dennis also shared with us his secrets to making sure the doors close flush with the face frame. He has created special stops. Without the stops the door would not close flush with the face frame, but would rather be slightly recessed into the cabinet. At the top of the door, a stop is made from a screen clip purchased locally at J&J Glass. A soft polyurethane bumper is added to deaden any rattle. Dennis has an original design for the bottom stop. He found an eyelet that slips just inside clear tubing. The eyelet is fastened to the bottom inside cabinet. He did investigate putting a patent on the eyelet tube, but found out it is too late because he has used it so widely in his cabinetry. However he does have other cabinet makers purchasing these from him in bulk.

For those present, and not present, at the meeting, I apologize for my humble attempt to capture all that Dennis shared with his. His pearls of wisdom are so numerous and detailed that it's difficult to capture all of them. I noticed other members taking notes and capturing as much information as possible. Dennis is always willing to offer advice and share his experience. Stop by and pay him a visit. A visit to Homestead Cabinetry and Furniture to get insight from Dennis Dahl is always a highlight of our year. Don't miss our next visit there.

### **Guild Officers**

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#### ***Directions***

***New Hwy 6 E. off 131 to  
M-37, N. to 28<sup>th</sup> St., Right  
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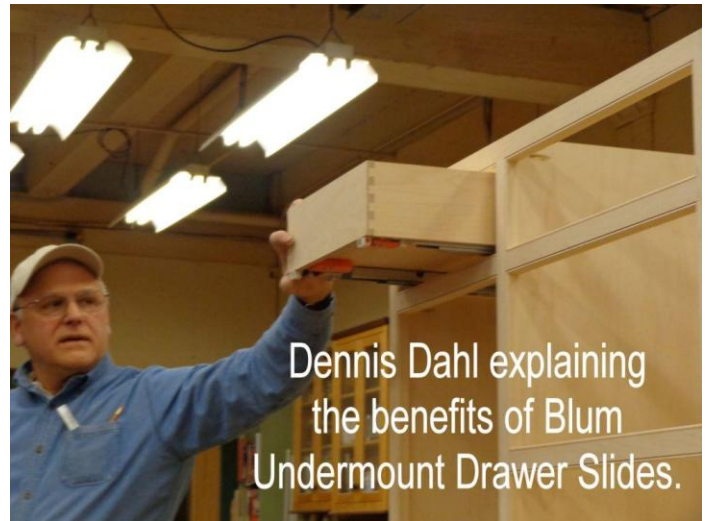




Bruce De Dee sharing safety tips with visitor Laurie Stocking.



Mike Kline (WEB site Manager) Pondering Ideas for the WEB site.



Dennis Dahl explaining the benefits of Blum Undermount Drawer Slides.





