



Woodworkers Guild



of

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

Next Meeting

December 9, 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:

Our scheduled program by Neal Ferguson is cancelled due to the death of his wife, Judy. Please extend your condolences to Neal and family.

Our meeting will include a "brief" presentation by fellow club member Ralph Babcock on mahogany stains.

Please bring examples of "show and tell" from your shop for sharing with the group. Include any pictures or samples of Christmas Gifts you have been inspired to build.

Many thanks to all who contributed to the Wooden Toys project for the Gospel Mission and Portage Community Center. President Bill will have an update in January on the success of this annual club program.

The November meeting was held at Duncan Aviation in Battle Creek. At one count there were at least thirty three members and guests present. Bill Crown gave a brief description of our guild to the guests and our hosts. We were issued visitor badges, safety glasses and safety instructions before the tour of the facilities began.

We were split into two groups with tour guides Eric Bekker and Greg McAllister. A tour is an understatement of our evening at Duncan. There is incredible craftsmanship, attention to details, customer demands and astronomical costs that comes with the jet set lifestyle.

The group I toured with was led by Greg. He is the lead of the Upholstery Shop. Greg emphasized that Duncan works as great as it does because of the people that work there. They are all proud and dedicated to their work and are on top of their game.

Walking through the facility, one will notice various pieces of art work collected and on display by the Duncan family. For those that have worked at Upjohn, it was reminiscent to me of the type of thing the Upjohn family had displayed at the plants back in the day.

The Battle Creek facility is one of three large facilities operated by Duncan. The other two are in Lincoln Nebraska and Provo Utah. About 50 other small facilities like Kalamazoo are located throughout the US.



Greg McAllister
One Of Two
Great Tour Guides

Greg explained how they work on every aspect of an aircraft. They will sometimes receive a brand new Dassault Falcon jet that is a bare bones shell. Duncan will custom finish it out like no one else in the business can. We saw at least three enormous hangars, all busy with work and aircraft. There is also a down draft paint booth for painting aircraft. The paint is a special epoxy mix with a limited 10 hour activation time.

Our tour started in the Upholstery Shop. Right away the bright lighting was noticed and this is carried throughout the entire facility. Greg showed us works in progress and explained how costs for new upholstery can vary



easily between \$350K and \$2.5M for a 10-12 seat plane. The seats are custom in every way. The foam padding is layered for a custom cushion, endless leather choices and 24 karat gold plating is available for the buckles and exposed metal. They deal with tight tolerances of 1/64" and picky customers with a large pile of money. They have been known to mock up a seat 18 or more times to please the customer. Once the final covering is agreed to, the remaining seats are finished.



Greg had numerous tidbits of information. One comment about how well the private jets are maintained. The depreciation of a private jet is only around 10% over a 10 years span because of the meticulous maintenance. Commercial jets don't adhere to the same standards as the private jets. They had the jet belonging to the President of Mexico grounded because of corrosion.



We moved on to the wood shop and saw a few things even Al Collision does not have.....yet. There was a surprising amount of familiar equipment such as table saws, band saws, routers and shapers. The uniqueness comes from the material used, jigs and the skills of the people using them. We noticed a crosscut sled hanging on the wall big enough to

hold a 4x8 sheet of plywood. Materials on hand included honeycomb fiberglass and aluminum sheets. This material gets covered with various exotic veneers. Johnson's Workbench in Charlotte is one of the veneer suppliers. The finish on the veneers can be very high gloss, wet or glass in appearance. It's not unusual to



Honey combed materials are
not only Strong, but Lightweight

sand down to 3000 grit. This saves polishing time and keeps finish from soaking into the veneer. 10-15 hours of time can easily be spent on finishing a small door.



We worked our way down to the hangers and it is amazing how many planes are being serviced at any given time. It appears

anything and everything is being done from tip to tail. Interior overhall, engine and landing gear, exterior painting, avionics, structural repair. We were allowed to peek through the window at the electronics and

avionics repair. We were not allowed in due to procedures to ground oneself and remove all static electrical charge. Workbench grounding straps must be connected to one's wrist before any thing can be worked on, removed or replaced into a box.



The evening came to a close back where we started. It felt like we had walked for miles. As in past visits, Duncan Aviation was wonderful hosts. It is evident that they do deliver exceptional work in all of the endeavors. Many thanks to our personal tour guides Greg and Eric.

Guild Officers

President - Bill Crown	375-1594
Vice President - Al Collison	685-8428
Treasurer - Mike Cline	685-0535
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Woodworkers Guild of S.W. Michigan

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