

WOODWORKERS



of Southwest Michigan

<http://www.woodguild.org> January 2019

Next meeting:

January 2019 @ 7:00pm

**Portage Northern High
School Woodworking Shop**

Parking will be on the north side of the building near the football stadium (Huskie Stadium). Entry to the wood shop is through the back door to the shop.

Agenda:

Tour of Portage Northern High School wood working shop and program.

The December meeting marked the final collection of toys for the Kalamazoo Gospel Mission and the Portage Community Center. The Show & Tell portion brought in a recommendation for the red 3M Pro Grade Precision sandpaper available at Home Depot and other retailers. The grit lasts significantly longer than regular sandpaper and the backing material is much less prone to sliding around on your sanding block. Another member shared an endorsement for Woodcraft in Grand Rapids, where an employee was able to help him track down replacement parts for his discontinued custom branding iron that had the element burn out. Our final endorsement came from a member with all of his fingers and a sawblade embedded in spent SawStop cartridge – it works! For projects, we saw a roll over bear, a quartersawn oak treasure box, a state of Michigan clock, a garden arbor, some 3d puzzles and the jig to make them, a live edge black walnut & cherry table, and a custom office work area with the skyline of Pittsburgh in the background. The treasure box was made using cut Tremont nails – still made in the same factory they've been making them in since 1819 (available online www.tremontnail.com) . The plans for the puzzle jig were from American Woodworker magazine, issue #142 from June/July 2009.

Our speaker for the evening was Chad Stanton, who you might remember from his contributions to American Woodworking magazine, the Popular Woodworking "I Can Do That" series, an appearance on the American Woodshop, or his YouTube videos. Over the last 21 years, Chad has been connected to woodworking through a variety of jobs. He is a licensed contractor, custom furniture maker, author, & star of the screen from Toledo, Ohio.

When Chad was first approached to join the "I Can Do That" series he turned it down, but eventually they won him over. The series was more complicated than you might expect – he was in charge of his own designs, but was only able to use a handful of commonly available tools & dimensional lumber to create them. In all, he designed and built 60 projects that require only a barebones tool selection (circular saw, jig saw, miter saw, etc.). He included his 20 best projects in his book "I Can Do That! Furniture Projects" - all of them simple, but visually appealing. He's most proud of the rocking chair. One project he brought to show us was the portable bench he uses. It's made from 2x12 material. The height is sized so that when he stands in front of it with his arms down and wrists bent so his hands are parallel to the bench top there is about 1" of clearance, perfect for hand planning. The bench separates into two pieces of equal height that serve as a set of sawhorses. With 2 pipe clamps he has a front vise and a tail vise. When stacked, the top of the lower portion provides a shelf. There is a

drawer in the top portion that serves as a tool well, and when flipped upside down it can extend the depth on the bench, doubling the size of the work surface. Plans for the bench are available on his website for woodworkers www.woodchoppintime.com. Note that Chad has another website www.stantonfinefurniture.com for clients that showcases his work.

Chad talked to us about making a career of woodworking. Like most fields, the easiest way get a million dollars in woodworking is to start with more than that and work your way down. To be successful at making ends meet, you'll need to wear many hats. If you're serious about considering this as a career there are some questions you'll need to ask yourself.

1) Can you be a professional woodworker? The reality is that it is tough and you need to understand yourself as a person. Are you self-motivated to get up, get out, & get working? There's a reason most jobs come with a boss, and when you're in charge you have to bring all of the motivation yourself.

a. How are you with money? Do you save? Are you a disciplined spender? You need to be for the slow times. Will you worry when business is slow, or you underbid a job? Chad's advice is not to keep track of your hours on a job. You will rush, you will make mistakes, and you will be more tempted to pass off imperfections that end up causing you to follow up with a fix. Successful quoting comes with practice and even then will not be perfect

b. Can you work alone? Being a 1 man band means figuring it all out by yourself, from the technically complicated (how do you lay out complex angles for the leg of an English style rustic bench) to physically problematic (how do you load/unload/install something large & heavy).

c. What is your skill level? Are you able to do the work people will pay for? Chad tells viewers to get out of their comfort zone to advance. Push yourself & let your customers push you (they will anyway). While each method of instruction has its limits, you can learn from a blog, a video, a book, a class, or a customer (you have to deliver what they want to get paid)

2) Should you be a professional woodworker? This is more a question of your surroundings and situation than your ability

a. Does the local population support small businesses? Where do people in your community shop? where do they eat? Do they support artists and value craftsmanship?

b. What is the competition? You need to understand what alternatives your customers have, from Walmart to other craftsmen. What are their strengths & weaknesses?

c. Are you building for yourself or others? Can you make a living by making the projects you want without saturating the market or do you need to take whatever work the market has to offer. Making what the market wants gives you more opportunity, but requires you to be more flexible and have some broader knowledge (code requirements for fireplace mantels, etc.) You also need to be prepared for others to mark up your work, selling your work with their fee on top of what you charged.

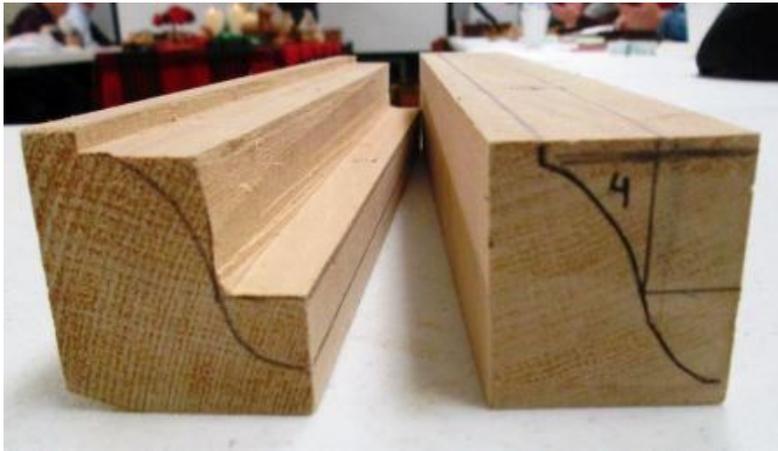
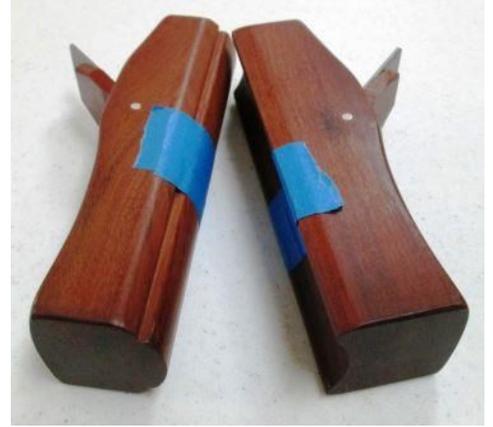
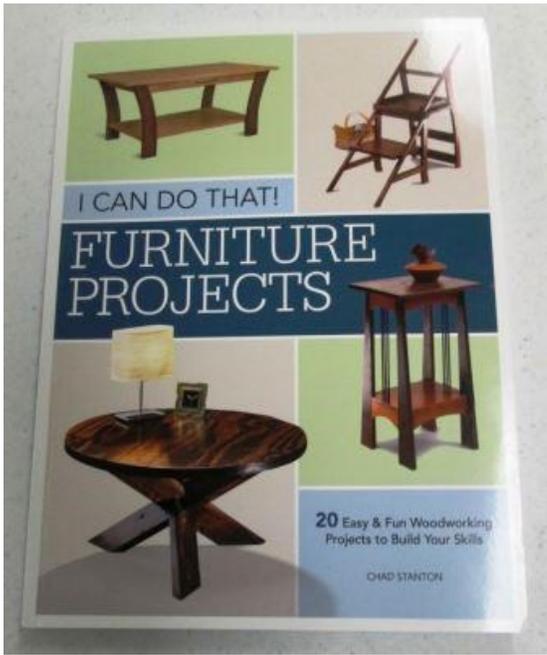
3) What is your image? How do you present yourself to the community? Chad keeps a plain white van, stays clean shaven and wears nice clothes for a meeting (he'll dress in work clothes once on the job but even those look presentable off the worksite)

If you've decided to start a business, Chad recommends finding your niche. Every person and market will be different. Chad found success in replicating old molding for homes in a historical area of Toledo. When someone does some remodeling or repair and needs to match up the woodwork, they can't go find it at Lowes or on Amazon. He has a basic set of hollow and round hand planes and uses them just like the woodworkers, or likely their apprentices, did back when the original trim was made. He has a set of Mujingfang planes. You can find a similar set on ebay for about \$150 – search “12pcs different size Round planes and Hollow planes”. He's a big fan of the rabbet plane and thinks everyone should have one... or more! Chad brought in a demo section of molding to show how the hollow and round planes build it up. (Side note: It was actually 3 separate 8/4 boards that were fastened together with dovetail keys and could be separated with a tap on the end – neat to see but hard to describe). With another set of sample boards he showed the progression from rectangular stock, to stepped square cuts to the finished complex curved profile. Chad has made molding pieces as long as 20', though with a long one or anything that's going to get mitered cuts it's important to keep the profile consistent. Harvesting the metal from old circular saw blade, he used a grinder and files to cut a scraper that matched the profile of his molding. This makes it easy to find and fix any high spots along the length. The increased height of refrigerators has given him a lot of work updating cabinets and trim to make it all fit – watch his video [Make Big Money as a Part Time Woodworker](#) if you want to see more.

Our last topic was finishing, which Chad admits is not his strength. He used to use a gravity feed spray gun, but has moved to the Earlex 5500 and is happy with it. He keeps separate guns for oil and water based finishes. Chad also offered a tip for keeping guns clean in the middle of a job. He'll throw some solvent in the bottom of a 5 gal bucket along with the gun and put a lid on it, and it stays fine overnight. For a shorter break, a rag soaked in solvent and draped over the nozzle keeps things from clogging. Chad also threw out a recommendation for a product called Crystalac, a waterborne finish made in the USA. He has good success with it custom mixing small batches of stain to match existing work. Check them out at <https://thecrystalacstore.com/>

After some Q&A, the club had a special treat raffling off several giftcards graciously donated by Woodcraft in Grand Rapids. Thanks Woodcraft, now those winners don't have to worry about making it to the “nice” list.

Thanks to Matt Erdmann for taking the December notes.





Woodworkers Guild of S.W. Michigan

7572 S. 10th St
Kalamazoo MI 49009

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 member ship dues are \$25/year.

Find us on the web at www.woodguild.org



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President - Bill Crown	375-1594
Vice President - Al Collison	685-8428
Treasurer - Ted Maxon	477-2577
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