

The Wood Rack

Newsletter of the Long Island Woodworkers' Club

February, 1998

Volume 9 Number 6

Next Meeting - Wed., Feb. 4 Secretary's Report Brush Barn, 7:30 PM

The speaker at our February meeting will be Alan Rosenberg, who is co-owner with his father of J & A Lumber in Ronkonkoma. Besides having formal training in the lumber business, Alan has been working with lumber for all his adult life. He will be speaking about the grading of lumber and choosing lumber for projects. He will bring in samples for examination and will be happy to answer any questions members might have.

President's Message

I hope everyone in attendance enjoyed our first meeting of the year. Thanks to those who helped clean up after the meeting. For us to have hands-on demonstrations which create sawdust, your help is needed in setting up and clean up. Nobody volunteered to take in or bring out our sign. It would be a shame if a guest speaker couldn't find the barn!

This year we would like to expand our library. Drop ideas for books and tapes in the new suggestion box.

Tape Rental: \$2.00 Book Rental: \$1.00

--Charlie Felsen

Our January meeting was held on the 7th at the Brush Barn in Smithtown. The meeting was opened promptly at 7:30 PM by our newly elected President, Charlie Felsen. Charlie thanked Jim Clancy for the great job done by Jim and his committee for the Toys for Tots Program. The quality and quantity of the toys donated was excellent. We received a nice review in *Newsday* and a sincere vote of appreciation from the USMC.

Joe Pascucci reported that we have \$3340.00 in the treasury and 164 paid members. Please remember that if you have not paid your 1998 dues, you will NOT get another reminder or the newsletter. Joe's address is 6 Florence Ct., S. Huntington, NY 11746-7404. If you have an email address, send it to Joe Pascucci, sawdustjoe@aol.com. He will add it to the membership list, which is available to all upon request.

Woodworkers Journal did an article about the club in their January issue -- a real nice three-pager on how the club was started, etc. I guess we are in the big time now!

SHOW 'N TELL: A marvelous example of fine craftsmanship was shown by John Scholz. It was a child's chair, part of a table and chair set made out of cherry. Thanks, John. If you have something of interest, please bring it in.

NAME TAGS: Please sign in and WEAR a name tag. We are at the point now where it is impossible to remember everyone's name.

MONTHLY RAFFLE:

Charlie James won a DeWalt router, and William Busch won a nice cherry slab. Bob Hall, John Keane and Cliff Hedinger all won dial calipers.

Our thanks to the DeWalt Company for donating the router and to Wes Demarest, guest speaker, for the cherry slab. The DeWalt crew, led by Rebecca Soffer and her six assistants, were on hand with their model 788 Scroll Saw for a hands-on demonstration. Wes Demarest gave a beautiful presentation using scroll saws. He showed some examples of his craftsmanship, including some intricate pattern work. Wes explained that you must gain experience in order to produce quality work on the more detailed patterns. Your body will adjust to the moves of your hands and they will work as a team as you become more proficient in making straight lines and difficult curves. This will come to you all of a sudden, so don't give up; keep on trying.

-- Bob Hall

Wood Notes by Ian Kirby

Editor's Note: This is the first in a series of articles on woodworking by Ian Kirby. The first article will be printed in two installments: Part One in this issue and Part Two in the March newsletter. Mr. Kirby has also agreed to answer one woodworking question per month in the newsletter. If you have questions, please mail them to me, Jim Cosgrove (return address on newsletter), no later than 10 days after a monthly meeting.

Hand-Cut Dovetails: A Matter of Practice (Part I)

Through dovetails have become a symbol of good workmanship and some form of quality. For whatever reason, there is also a belief that the through dovetail is a difficult joint to make. It's simply not the case, and if you think about it, all you are cutting is a piece of wood about 3/4" square -- so how difficult can that be?

I believe that if you want to learn to make this joint -- or any other -- you break it down into its various parts and practice making the relevant cuts. What I've done here is to describe the tools and cuts you will use in making a through dovetail. All you have to do is practice.

Saws for Cutting Dovetails

There are several hand saws used for cutting dovetails:

The Back Saw

Refined sawing and joint-making is done by a class of saws known as back saws. With these saws, we can work to a tolerance accurate enough to produce a joint interface which fits directly from the tool.

The characteristic feature of back saws is the folded metal strip on the top edge of back of the saw -- from which it takes its name. The strip, made of brass or steel, stiffens the blade and prevents it from flexing when sawing on the push stroke. There is no evidence to show that one metal performs better than the other. Brass is somewhat more attractive than steel when polished, and since it is a more expensive metal, the saw with a

brass back was always priced higher. This higher price was taken to mean the entire saw was of higher quality, and so steel-backed saws came to be seen as inferior. Over the years, these judgments, although wrong at first, have led to a self-fulfilling prophecy, because steel is now used for cheaper and poorer saws, and quality sawmakers use brass on their product.

The smaller of the back saws is called a dovetail saw (Fig. 1). Its size makes it ideal for cutting the joint from which it takes its name. The dovetail saw is 8-9 inches long and has a very thin blade with 18-20 points per inch (ppi). Because of its thinness and small teeth which leave a smooth surface, beginners are tempted to choose it to cut all "fine" joints, irrespective of the size of the stock being cut. In use, the dovetail saw will not retain accuracy of direction in material that is much more than 1 in. x 1 in. in section.

For example, you can not accurately cut a 1 1/2 in. long tenon on the end of a 2 3/4 in. wide rail. The blade simply wanders off the line, despite your best efforts. Except for occasionally cutting very small-sectioned material, the dovetail saw should be reserved for the making of dovetails.

Dozuki Saw

The dozuki saw (Fig. 2) is designed to make fine cuts in small sectioned wood and is mainly used for dovetails. There are three or four lengths of saw available, ranging from 7-10 inches measured along the cutting edge. The teeth are long and fine, and the ppi range between 18-24. The back edge and the tooth edge are not parallel; the thin blade tapers toward the handle and is

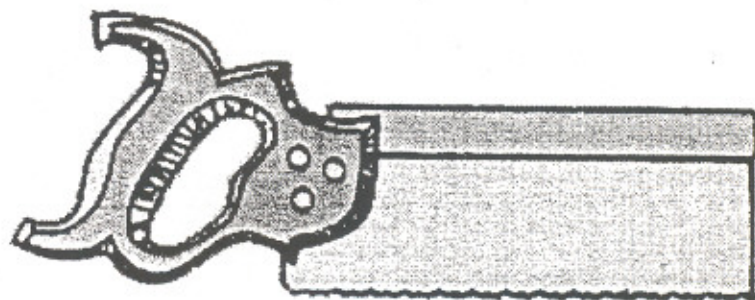


Fig. 1 Dovetail Saw

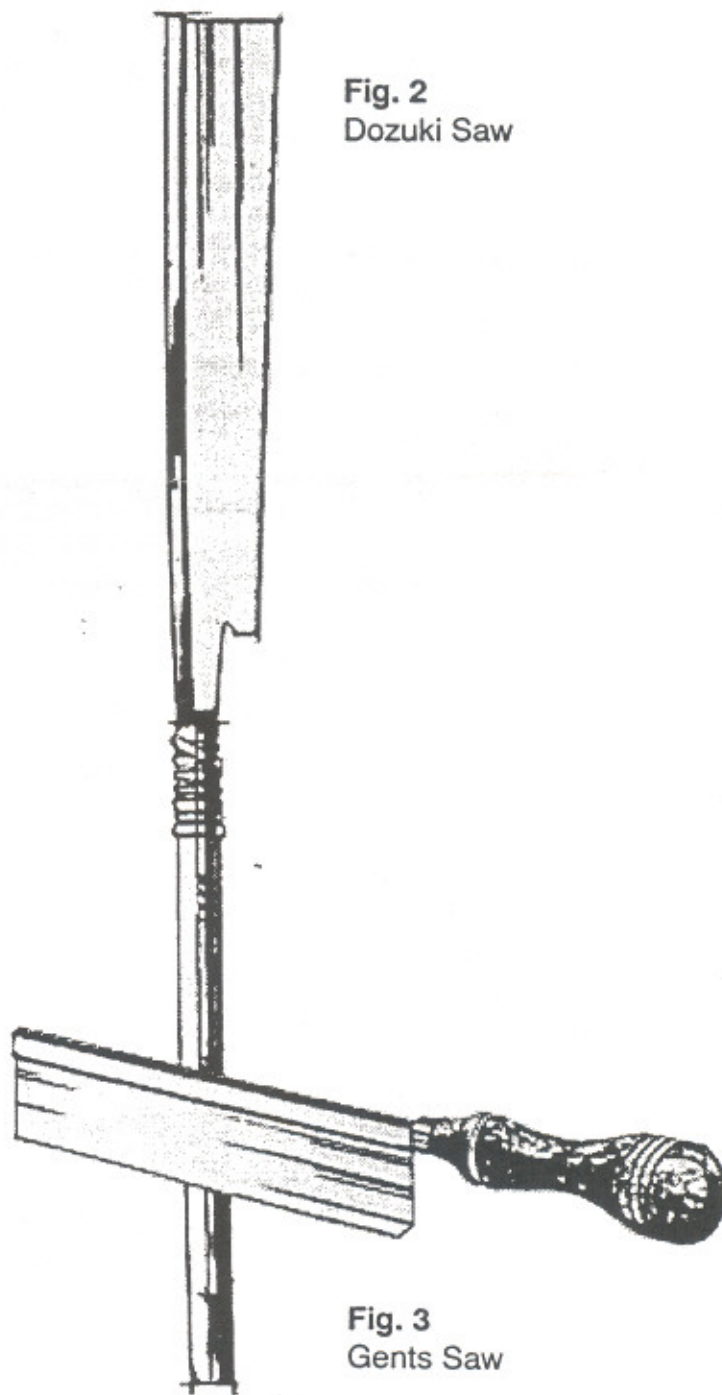


Fig. 2
Dozuki Saw

Fig. 3
Gents Saw

stiffened with a steel back. The dozuki is always used one-handed.

Gents Saw

The gents saw (Fig. 3) is made in three or four different sizes, from 4-9 in. long. The shorter, thinner blades have up to 30 ppi, and the larger, thicker blades have 16-20 ppi. They are used for sawing small section material. The saws, which have the same ppi as a dovetail saw, are simply an alternative to the dovetail saw. The finer saws are useful when dealing with inlays, bandings, and small moldings. The turned bulbous handle was made of boxwood on earlier tools. Held with index finger pointing along the top of the handle and back, it provides a good grip and is well suited to the action of sawing. Gents is the London Cockney abbreviation of the word gentleman. The saw was supposedly favored by the few amateur woodworkers of the last

century, and it became known as the "Gent's Saw."

Market Place

FOR SALE: Router Table. 24" x 32" laminated mdf board. Fence is 34" extruded aluminum. Stand made of hardwood legs. 31" high. Table insert included. Great condition. \$120.00.

Fine Homebuilding 1-50, plus four slipcases, great condition. \$150.00. *American Woodworker* 26-63, also great condition. \$120.00.

Ten slipcases for *Fine Woodworking* magazine. Will hold 100 issues. Excellent condition. \$50.00. Call Roger Schroeder, 691-2095.

Black and Decker Radial Arm Saw -- 10" blade. Adjustable for crosscut, rip, and angle cuts. Table and stand included. \$150.00. Call Al Schryver, 543-3327.

Maple burls and highly figured maple slabs, 2 1/2" thick, some as long as 9 feet and as wide as 30". Call Lenny Mulqueen, 935-2674.

Delta 6" jointer, older model, \$50.00. Call Gene Schneider, 271-3286.

FOR SALE: 8 1/4" Makita portable tablesaw. Good condition. Excellent job site saw. \$150.00. Joe Pascucci, 385-1877.

Long Island Woodworkers' Club
c/o Jim Cosgrove
3570 Manchester Road
Wantagh, NY 11793-3011

First Class Mail