

The Woodrack

May 2020 Volume 29 Issue 5

From the desk of Mike Daum

I greet you all with the sincerest hope that you are well and healthy, even as others we know and love may not be. Our hearts and thoughts of healing are shared to all who are adversely affected by our current global situation. The Reardon family lost Barbara recently in a battle with cancer. We offer our deepest condolences to this inspiring family.

If there is one thing as woodworkers that we have learned to do well, it is adapt. We may not have all of the tools in the shop to handle every task, so we improvise. A part that was cut to an unintended size now creates a "modification". If we do the best we can with what we have, we achieve regardless of obstacles along the way.

This is so true in life, which you already know. And in the context of our group, we are adapting as well, like so many other groups and businesses. We will most likely be facing a long span of time before physically meeting again. Just last night on April 14th, we held our first

ever virtual meeting. Corey Tighe gave us a tour of his new shop, and took us through the process of making a jig to create fluted columns. With a peak of 30 people viewing from Facebook Live on our Long Island Woodworkers page, there were encouraging comments and lively interaction - all without disruptive talk (Ahem Joe Botts) to distract the presenter (Corey). Steve Eckers would have been relieved. Aside from the pauses and interrupted video due to the unavailability of wifi (Corey streamed over data), it was remarkably successful. We will plan to host another general meeting on Wednesday May 6th at 7pm. This would be our usual "first Wednesday of the month" meeting. By then, we will have the topcoat applied (my attempt to revise the old "ironed out" adage). Wifi stream, multiple speakers, current LIW business reports. Just like the in-person days. Will there be a phrase created for that? "Social distancing" came out of nowhere.

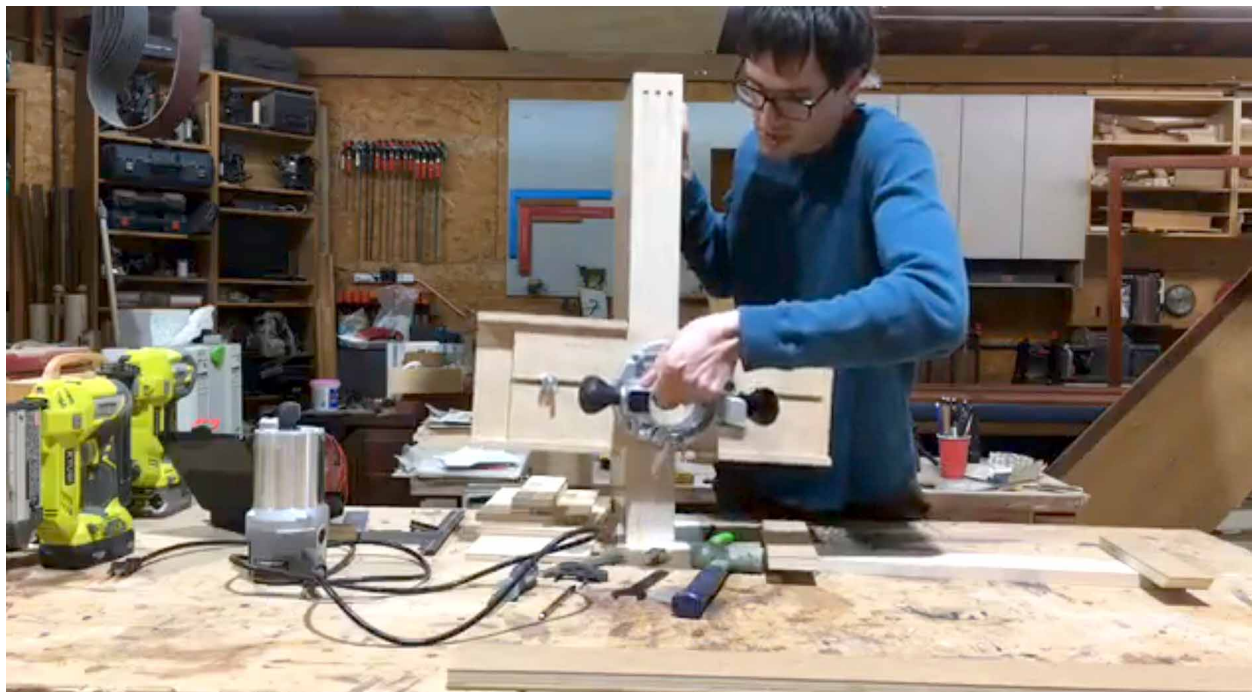
At this time, we will most likely host the May meeting from the Zoom app - all the rage right now - pun intended for those frustrated by all

this technology. The Zoom meeting will also allow us to stream on Facebook Live simultaneously, for those who are just too familiar with Facebook to try anything else. So some may choose to join the meeting in Zoom while others from Facebook, at the same time. Watch for email notifications in the next days and weeks. We hope to have a guest presenter at the meeting to demo from... anywhere they may be in the world!

As for Show 2020, we are exploring other options to showcase our projects. The Cradle of Aviation may still be viable, however it all depends on how businesses fare through this in the coming months. We will keep you posted, however,,, and you should know this was coming...we'll NEED YOUR PROJECTS! If there's one thing more of us have right now, it's time to spend in the shop. What to do if you're stuck on a technique or project? Reach

out to your fellow woodworker! The liwoodworkers.org website is one of the most valuable tools we all own but hardly use! And YouTube has tutorials on just about everything imaginable (grimacing). Having projects ready is much better than waiting to announce a show date and then scramble to create or finish them!

I miss seeing you all. I miss watching you interact in the Barn before the meeting starts; seeing half of you trying to stay awake in those chairs during a demo. The faint talking in the back of the room while a presenter is speaking. Bob Urso rifling through his inventory. Gary Mayhew winning every raffle drawing. Me holding the mic up to one of you during Show and Tell. Jim Moloney looking for the best angle to get that picture. And I yearn for the day that we can all smell the sawdust together at our next meeting!



Corey in his shop for our first virtual meeting

A view from Corey's shop



The jig Corey made





Barbara Reardon joined the LIW with her husband Joe and their two children Tim and Matt. She her husband Joe were always dedicated to the boys. Barbara took a liking to our Scroll Sawing Special Interest Group after the boys showed interest in it. Along with her children, she went on to purchase a scroll saw and did some nice work which they all proudly showed off at our meetings. Barbara was easy to talk to at club functions, often offering advice on how she did her projects, including the bumps along the road that occurred with the project. She was very friendly and a pleasure to be around. Barbara enjoyed going on family vacations together to various parts of the United States. She will be missed by one and all.

Jim Moloney

Prep for finishing

By Daryl Rosenblatt with a really really really big assist from Joe Bottigliere

Most finishing articles start by telling you about all the different types of finish out there: Oil, shellac, lacquer, polyurethane, etc. That really should be about the last thing on your mind when deciding on a finish. If you want to know where to really start, heed the words of one of the great furniture makers of the last century, and good friend to the LIW.

"If you want a great finish, it starts with your wood selection."

Frank Klausz

When I first started to get serious about woodworking, I watched Norm Abrams on *The New Yankee Workshop*, and read the magazines out there: *Fine Woodworking* (even then!), *American Woodworker*, and to me the most important for a beginner : *Woodsmith*. I haven't seen it in many years, but in those days (the late 1980s) they had a cut list showing how to break apart designated pieces of lumber. That might be OK when dealing with plain home center wood, but it doesn't cut it (no pun intended) for fine furniture and woodwork. That's why Frank was so serious about wood selection. Wood, even from the same tree, has all sorts of things you have to deal with: Grain direction, knots, color changes, even reaction (where it will curve and warp no matter what you do). If you plan the grain and color right, most of the finishing is done for you from the start. This entails choosing a good grain and figure match. Disregard the annular rings and construct a board with the prettiest look. Frank also insisted that the inside face of a plank (toward the center of the tree) is always the nicest and should be seen; that would be a good start in selection.

Assuming I've picked the right wood and oriented it correctly, what's next? Here is where I begin to prepare the surfaces for finishing. Let's consider a project that has just taken 90 hours (plus or minus) to construct. Finally, you look at it and you are so happy knowing Mike Daum will love to get it in the show. All that is left is a "little" finishing. Or so you would think. There could still be as many hours required to apply a "finish" as it took to construct the piece. The surface must now be prepared to accept that finish. Do not take this process for granted.

I remember a project at our 2003 Sports Plus show. Someone made a nice chest; they took the wood from the planer, cut it to size, applied a finish and then their top was done and installed. Except the maker hadn't even sanded the top! He never properly prepared the surface, leaving the planer marks visible! Those are the little ripples that are inevitably produced by separate blades in a rotating cutter head. I guess it *felt* smooth enough to him; it certainly wasn't to the *eye*.

With a properly constructed surface, I begin my surface preparation with smoothing. That means getting out the hand planes and removing those nasty chatter marks left by the planer. This is a great start. Planes can leave a surface with a sheen like no other, but rare is the project with a hand planed surface as a final step. Hand planes can leave tear out (**unless, of course, you are Joe Botts**) which needs to be addressed. In this case, I turn to my card scraper to remove any of that nasty stuff being careful not to create any divots.

I now like to create a uniform surface necessary to accept a finish. Here is where I employ a

disciplined sanding schedule. I prefer to run through a series of graduated grits. Everyone says “sand,” but how? What is the process? Should it be a powered sander or by hand with a block?

Marc Adams once told me, when he was a cabinetmaker he hired a new assistant and told him to sand all the kitchen cabinets smooth. The new employee was enthusiastic, and proceeded to sand all the veneer off. He hadn’t learned “how” to sand. So let’s go over that.

You can sand using power sanders or by hand with a block. Nothing is faster than a power sander, but that’s not always a good thing. I am referring to random orbital sanders (ROS) or finishing sanders not belt sanders. Belt sanders really are not a finishing tool. They are far too aggressive. First, let’s take a moment to discuss another tool – the sandpaper.

You want to use a quality product. Most no-name brands often found in hardware or big stores are usually of a lesser quality. Their grits are not consistent; their paper is thinner and inferior; and the adhesive bonding the abrasive to it is weaker. Using a more popular name brand like 3M or Norton is a far more reliable prospect as are some of the lesser known companies like Klingspore or Rhino Red. The latter, offered by Lake Shore Hardwoods, was one of the best I ever used. Just a light dusting with a paint brush and it was clean and ready to keep going. So, stick with a known brand. You pay a little more, but it lasts longer and gives better results. Also, a quality product can be used on a machine or sanding block with equal results. You can also cut it into strips and apply some duct tape (it really is good for lots of things) to the back for sanding contoured surfaces.

Now, what grit do I start with? I still consider these powered finishing sanders rather aggressive and should be used for heavier, abrasive work. I typically use my ROS with 36 to 50 grit paper and limit its use to larger flat

surfaces. (I admit, I have used it on a smaller piece, recently. I had to level an inlay of some crushed opal in epoxy. It would have been nearly impossible by hand. Still, it was slow going, taking a lot of time but sparing a lot of elbow grease.) However, if your surface is flat and smooth – planer marks levelled and tear out removed (including the aforementioned epoxy inlay)– I like to start with 120P grit paper. I follow the same process regardless of whether I am using a power sander or sanding block.

I start by using a soft #2 (or 4B if you are savvy) pencil and lightly draw large markings over the surface. (I write down the grit # I am using as well. I never know what distractions lie ahead.) Assuming I am using my grinder-style ROS, I grip the body just behind the handle. I prefer not to use the handle. Slightly tilting the machine up, I contact the wood with only the top half of the pad. Moving methodically over the surface, I continue sanding until all the pencil marks are gone. If the marks are not removed quickly enough, I may not be applying enough pressure, so I correct that accordingly. With all the marks gone, I thoroughly dust off the surface and examine my progress. Here I use a raking light and get my eyes close to the surface. That is, I shine a light source, not from above, but at nearly a level plane with the surface from behind me while I lower my head to scan across the wood. This is a far more reliable and tell-tale method to assess my progress. I look for any missed spots or errant scratches and remove them as necessary.

I repeat that process for each subsequent grit – 150P; 180P; 220P; etc – without skipping a grit – marking, sanding, dusting and scanning. I stop at the grit recommended by the coating manufacturer or my experience. After reaching that point, typically 220P (though some oil finishes recommend as high as 600), I follow up the dusting by wiping the entire surface down with a rag moistened with denatured alcohol. I examine the surface while it is wet.

Here is when I may find any “polliwigs” – those little swirly curlies typically left by an ROS. Please note: Anyone who tells you an ROS is a final step in finish sanding is also selling bridges in Brooklyn. You need to hand sand, with the grain, before you are done. I mark any polliwig with chalk and proceed to remove them by hand with a block and the last grit of sandpaper I used on the machine.

This same procedure will be followed regardless of whether I power sand or hand sand. The only exception, of course, would be removing the polliwigs. You don’t get them from straight line sanding with a block.

If you have followed my process so far, you can be happy that your surfaces are all nicely sanded. OK, half happy because you aren’t done sanding. Now, I take a damp sponge and wet down all the surfaces to raise the grain. Don’t soak the wood, just dampen it. Let it dry completely. The water will cause the grain to raise and get fuzzy. Sand lightly, again, with the last grit used beforehand, at a slight angle to knock those fuzzies off. Raising the grain and sanding it smooth will facilitate later applications of some coatings. Water based dyes, for instance, will raise grain, requiring sanding of the stained surface. Pre-empting that, puts you in control and provides for more predictable results. Another important fact to note is that with a properly hand planed surface you can usually skip this step (like Joe Botts), because the wood fibers are severed not abraded and compressed. I can then move on to the next step.

This is the point where I decide if I want or need to fill the pores of the wood or not. Is the wood porous? Do I want a natural, open pore feel? If it’s a large tabletop, and your wood is oak, you may want to use a grain filler. Surely, if you are planning on a film finish (poly, shellac, lacquer, etc.) it is all but necessary to fill the pores. Otherwise, the finish will create craters over the pores. But pore filler can discolor contrasting inlays. When I want the

pores filled but need to avoid spoiling the surrounding wood or features, I use a “homemade” recipe. My alternative to commercial fillers also has the added bonus of sealing the surface in the process. I use what I consider to be the most remarkable wood finishing material in the world: shellac. Shellac is a natural finish and is an excellent first, sealer coat as well as a full top coat on almost any project. It will adhere to almost anything, and anything will adhere to it – assuming you use the de-waxed version. My recipe calls for a “one-pound cut” of shellac, a salt shaker of fine sanding dust (of the same wood), graphite powder and a soft cotton rag. Add a small amount of the graphite to the shaker of sawdust (the graphite darkens the sawdust, which is needed to blend into the piece—seriously, if you don’t darken it, it won’t match). To fill in the pores (and even some fairly large gaps in a piece), sprinkle some of the dust/graphite mix (not too much) onto the surfaces. Dampen the cotton cloth with shellac. Apply the shellac with some pressure in a circular motion. You can add a bit more dust into gaps and rub it in. Allow this to dry. Follow up by lightly sanding with 220 grit. Then sprinkle, rub and repeat. I did a small project this year in bubinga which took 5 of these sessions. Oak might take more, mahogany less. It depends on the wood and its porosity. But it’s a fast process. Shellac dries VERY quickly, though each subsequent coat takes a bit longer. Soon the piece will be ready for final finishing. Again, I check with the raking light and look for a level surface where the pores are full. When I am satisfied, It’s time for the top coat.

I’ve used both flakes and premixed shellac with equal success and failures. Shellac has a shelf life and most all the failures were due to age. (Not mine, the shellac’s!) So, make sure your product is fresh in the can or made fresh from flakes. (Please see my follow up article on using shellac.) As a precaution, I always write the purchase date on the can or container of flakes. So, then I proceed to add several coats of

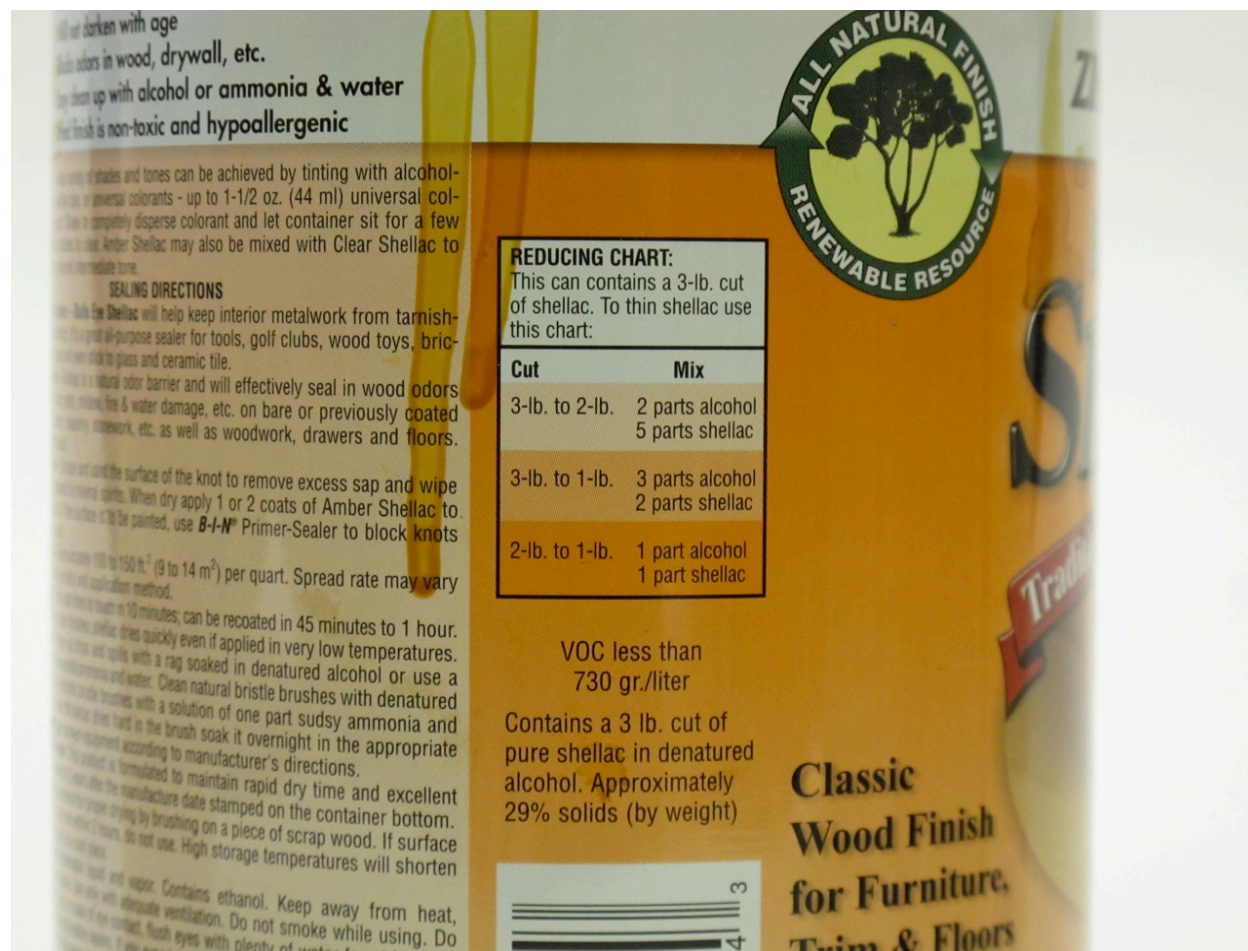
shellac until I am satisfied with the build. One of the beauties of shellac is that it doesn't need to be sanded between coats. They melt into each other and become as one. Jim Hennefield (who's work and finish are both fantastic) pointed out that he applies shellac to a piece numerous times over many days, just passing the piece and adding another thin coat.

No matter what finish you use (and shellac is a great topcoat for many projects by itself), the main ingredient is time. You need to apply the top coat and allow it to FULLY cure – at least 7 days but as long as 30 days is not too long. Then (as Frank Klaus put it) finish the finish. I

lightly sand with the grits going up from 400 to as fine as I am comfortable with: 1000, 15 micron, whatever I feel is needed, and the manufacturer says is fine. But don't rush it.

Remember, that 90 hour project will take another 90 to finish. You can make a project go together faster by just changing joinery or some other procedure. For finishing, chemistry doesn't change. Each coat still has to dry and you can't speed it up. So really the best tool for finishing isn't better sandpaper, or a high end sander, or Purdy brushes or Bush Oil, it's patience.

This is no longer on the Zinsser can



Long Island Woodworkers Board Meeting

April 2, 2020

Televideo Session

Members Present

Joe Bottigliere	✓	Mike Daum	✓
Steve Fulgoni	✓	Steve Kelman	Abs.
Bill Leonhardt	✓	Mike Mittleman	✓
Jim Moloney	✓	Frank Napoli	Abs.
Ben Nawrath	✓	Joe Pascucci	✓
Ed Piotrowski	Abs.		

Corey Tighe	Guest 1		Guest 2
	Guest 3		Guest 4

Meeting called to order 6:10 PM

Agenda

Topic First board session held via televideo using Zoom	Discussion: President Daum welcomed board members in attendance. Mike provided a broad vision of LIW direction for the coming year. Action: Members adjusted microphones and cameras, and the meeting commenced.
New Business	
Topic Converting from a social club to a charity	Discussion: The board reviewed and commented on a draft version of a new Certificate of Incorporation, which is a necessary component of moving to a charity-type nonprofit corporation. Potential costs for legal services and application fees were examined. Action: One requirement of NYS charities is the corporation owns all assets, and should the organization dissolve, all assets must be transferred to another charity or governmental unit. A vote was held and the motion to continue developing a new Certificate of Incorporation necessary to become a charity was approved with one dissent. Concern was voiced about the increased administrative duties required for charities versus social clubs.

Agenda

Topic Lack of LIW meetings due to the COVID-19 pandemic	Discussion: The viability of holding online LIW meetings was discussed as an answer to the ban on traditional face-to-face sessions. The possibility of engaging “name” woodworkers was mentioned. Action: The concept of online sessions was approved. Corey Tighe volunteered to provide the first real-time demonstration. Mike D., Bill L., Steve F., and Jim M. agreed to work together to develop LIW online demonstration capabilities. The board unanimously approved these actions.
Topic Annual Show	Discussion: Bill L. led a conversation regarding the annual show. Bill emphasized that there is a possibility the show might still be held at the Cradle of Aviation since the COVID-19 disrupted economy may force schedule changes and event cancellations for other organizations. An alternative strategy was proposed to hold an event at the Brush Barn if suitable dates are available. Action: Decisions were placed on hold until the pandemic and potential event restrictions are better understood.

Meeting Adjourned 7:30 PM

Submitted By: MM

Date: 4/23/2020

Turner's Guild

Jim Moloney

I hope to schedule a Zoom meeting for the Turners SIG soon, if anyone is interested in doing a live demo from their shop please email me at jpatmo@aol.com and we will work out the details. I am currently assisting the LI Woodturners Association with their first Zoom meeting with show and tell and a demo on April 25. We had a couple brief practice sessions for members that are unfamiliar with Zoom and that went well.

LICFM

Ben Nawrath

Right now we're waiting to see how the other virtual presentations and platforms go before we try to do one of our own, but I hope everyone is keeping busy. Please join me in the Facebook group and on the website forum in sharing what you've been working on! Last night I dry fit the bench seat of the hall tree I'm working on in between kindergarten spelling lessons and PE class (bike rides). I hope everyone is staying healthy.



This is a personal note for some of the members. A group of us would have a late dinner at Carrabba's after the meeting. Over the years, we had our "personal" waiter, Joseph Gargiana; he was a letter carrier by day, waiter by night, and we named him an honorary member. He even came to our shows; once, figuring we would be hungry brought a bag of apples. He passed away March 31st in his home; we don't know the circumstances, but he will be missed.

The way I found his obituary (Joe Bottigliere got the news from a mutual acquaintance) was from his cell phone. My number was the code we used to get discounts from Carrabba's as regular customers. He called me once when we didn't show up just to make sure we were OK,. That's the kind of person he was.

