

NEWS & INFO FOR
BOAT BUILDERS
CONTRACTORS
WOODWORKERS

BIRDSEYE VIEW

IN THIS ISSUE:

- SCOTT PHILLIPS
- VINTAGE TOOLS ON DISPLAY
- MEET MIKE JOHNSON
- HOPKINS WOODWORK

IT'S SHOWTIME !

School starts again soon, and our Wood Expo 2009 is just around the corner, Friday, September 11th, and Saturday, September 12th in Charlotte, MI with many artisans and vendors showing their wares and sharing their talents acquired over a lifetime of woodworking.

I think this is one of the aspects of woodworking I love most. Artisans and vendors offering solutions and suggestions based upon their many years of trials, errors, and successes.

At our show, you'll find Scott Phillips teaching on several different aspects of woodworking, Steve Hopkins showing his refined methods of traditional woodworking, John Wilson demon-



19th CENTURY TOOLS ON DISPLAY

While our company's founder, Laurin Lewis Johnson enjoyed the luxury of a steam-powered portable sawmill when starting his business a century ago, a mere decade before that, woodworkers crafted their wood creations with the aid of foot-powered equipment.

We are honored to have some of these vintage tools and equipment on display at our Charlotte location through the end of the year. Be sure to stop in and travel with us, back in woodworking time, to the 19th century. ■

Contributed by Sherry Johnson

Recently Tim Johnson visited a local woodworker with a vast collection of predominantly 19th Century woodworking equipment -- possibly the largest collection of its kind in the world. Bill Carter, now 82 years young, started collecting after retiring at the age of 55.

Tim enjoyed a fascinating tour of the collection housed in Bill's garage and barn. The tour covered only part of Bill's vast prized possessions. He also stores a substantial number of antique tools at an off site location.

Over the years, Bill has traveled the world displaying his antiques to willing audiences. But more recently he has slowed his pace, no longer traveling very far from home.



Michigan's Delta Township resident, Bill Carter has possibly the largest collection of vintage woodworking tools in the world.

strating how to make Shaker boxes, others on making strip canoes, carvers showing off their intricate designs, and James Trendel showing how to make works of art on a scroll saw. The list goes on and on.

Much like the mission of this publication, they want to further the trade by sharing ideas and experiences. I hope you enjoy our publication and are able to share with us during our Wood Expo, Sept 11 & 12, Charlotte MI; Wood Showcase, Oct. 9 & 10, South Bend IN; and Wood Fair, Nov. 6 & 7, Grand Rapids MI.

Mark Johnson

INDUSTRY NEWS

TALKING WITH MASTER WOODWORKER SCOTT PHILLIPS

Scott Phillip's enthusiasm and respect for the craft of woodworking has helped make *The American Woodshop* a favorite among public television audiences over the past 15 years.

Our relationship with Scott Phillips began 32 years ago when, as a forestry student, he came for a tour of our sawmill. Scott remembers that day very well, "I thought, man, this is heaven... because you sold these wonderful woods. And what's been neat for me, is to see you grow. I got to see Johnson's Workbench, your retail division, at its very beginning." For the past 15 years, we have enjoyed Scott's involvement in our fall wood shows. You can visit with Scott at our 2009 Wood Expo, Saturday, Sept. 12 at our Charlotte location.

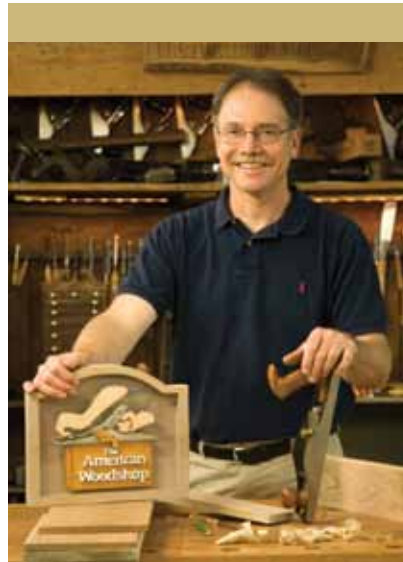
The other day, my brother Tim and I (Sherry) got a chance to talk with Scott. Following is part of our conversation with him.

SHERRY: Are you seeing any 'new' interest in woodworking?

SCOTT: In America for years we saw declining numbers of independent home woodworkers. And I call that the Microsoft years -- where the digital age won over the imagination of the up-and-coming students in high schools and colleges -- and they did not go down the traditional woodworking road at all. Other things took their imagination.

Well, now the current generation in the high schools and colleges -- they're actively pursuing woodworking related careers and classes. So much so that it's creating shortages of classroom space. There are waiting lists to get into the woodworking programs. That's a very important message to get out there.

The other thing is for people who do not think that woodworking is growing again in America, they need to go to



the website, woodlinks.org and see how active this organization is, building woodworking programs in schools in America right now.

SHERRY: What new woodworking technologies are you intrigued about?

SCOTT: There are some really cool things that are going on. In one of my shows this season, I designed a shell that I carved by hand for Queen Anne and Chippendale furniture. By hand, that shell takes me about 35 hours to carve. Well, I thought, boy, I'd like to build several of these lowboys, Queen Anne style, with the shell, and it'd be nice if I could just carve those out on my CNC. Now I can carve those shells in an hour and 42 minutes. Still my work, I designed it, but not in the traditional way. And so there's a huge new wave of interfacing computer technology into woodworking through the many affordable CNCs that are coming into shops these days.

Now that is not to take a way from the major innovations that have come in the hand tools as well. There are some wonderful metal break-throughs that are making steel for cutting tools last tremendously longer. There's new technology in forstener bits that is phenomenal.

The other thing, on the cutting side of things, Freud has come up with the new router bit design, its called the Quadra-cut, its just staggering what that bit will do. It's the most unbelievable cut I've ever seen. It produces the finest edge I've ever seen off of

any router bit for small shop use. So that has been a big innovation.

The woodworking market may appear stagnate, its not. It's very vibrant, it's growing, and people are innovating. I've been doing woodworking now since I was 11. So that's 42 years of woodworking. And the proof that innovation is still coming, to me, is that any good woodworking store, like yours, when I go in, I cannot leave that store without spending around \$400 on things I've never seen before that will make my work go better.

SHERRY: How did you develop a love for woodworking?

SCOTT: My father got the very first Masters in Forestry from Purdue University. I went to forestry school at Michigan State. One of my professors, Jonathan Wright, had everyone introduce themselves in class. I said, I'm Scott Phillips, and that's all I said. Professor Wright picked me out of the crowd and asked "Your father wouldn't happen to be John Phillips would he?" I said, "Yes sir, how did you know that?" He replied, "I helped him get his masters at Purdue in 1947." You know, that was really neat.

SHERRY: You mentioned you've been woodworking since you were eleven. Do you remember your first woodworking project?

SCOTT: My dad had about 1,000 bf of walnut that was 12" and wider from the family farm that he had set aside for his favorite projects. I didn't know that. I just saw his woodshop there, and the wood, and saw an opportunity. It was summer time and Dad was out in Idaho fishing. I couldn't ask him if I could use it, so I just started build-



See Scott on *The American Woodshop* on public television stations across the United States and Canada. Check your local listing for dates and times.

ing things for the neighbors. And the thing that sold the best was solid walnut shelves, made out of these nice wide walnut boards. I was making money hand over fist that summer. I sold the shelves for about \$15 a shelf, so they were dirt cheap, and since I didn't have any money in them, that was pure profit. Just a little bit of shop time, right?

But when dad got home and saw his walnut pile almost completely gone he asked, "Where's my walnut?" I thought he'd be very proud of me for the initiative as a woodworker, and making all these things for the neighbors. Instead I got a spanking out of that. I think I used about \$2,500 worth of walnut.

TIM: Is that why you bought the ginormous walnut tree while you were at Hartzells -- to replace your dad's stock?

SCOTT: I actually have some of that wood left over from the top log, but that tree ended up in a hotel as veneer in Europe. That was my biggest timber purchase ever. My timber buying days were wonderful. I started buying timber for Hartzell Veneer Co., which is now out of business unfortunately, back in 1978 when I graduated. I did that for seven years. That was a dream job. But in 1980, the export prices for walnut and oak sky rocketed and in a matter of three years all the domestic supply of merchantable walnut and white oak had been depleted to the point that veneer companies could no longer cut domestic veneer the way they use to. It was either change and start producing thinner veneers or get out of business. Hartzell ended up getting out of business. I'd probably still be buying timber today if that would not have happened. I loved that job.

TIM: Speaking of loving your job, what are your personal highlights from *The American Woodshop*?

SCOTT: We came up and did the tour of your plant there...that will go down in history as one of the top 10 shows. People absolutely love that show. Because its rare for TV shows that take you behind the scenes into the lumber side of it like that.

But, I will never forget, being with Sam Maloof on his property, the day that the State of California took over his original homestead for an 18 lane highway expansion project. We shot that, and that became my favorite TV show of all time.

Sam started by building furniture out of orange crates and is now one of the biggest names in all of woodworking. He brought an honest approach to

woodworking. It wasn't complicated, he always considered himself first and foremost a woodworker. He didn't take any other trappings other than woodworker. Sam was one of the best artisans who ever walked the face of the earth. He really had an eye for line and thus, that's how he developed his distinctive style.

Sam always was humble, he was always appreciative, and the other thing I was really inspired by and tried to make part of who I am is, Sam would

always share ideas with others openly and freely. He really did try to share good ideas with people to help their work go easier and better. So if there was one lesson that I'd like to remember Sam by more than anything else, I would guess it would be how much he gave. He was a genuine giver to others. That's huge in this world. (For more information about Sam Maloof's work, visit malooffoundation.org). ■

Contributed by Sherry Johnson & Tim Johnson

EMPLOYEE PROFILE



Over 90% of the lumber our Company sells is qualified by Mike Johnson before our customers get a chance to see it. *"The material I received from you was almost flawless..." "I have not seen such quality lumber anywhere..." "I received my lumber order last Thursday and it was outstanding!!"* are common responses we hear from our customers thanks to Mike's expertise.

Mike is the son of Ted and Ingrid Johnson. He attended Charlotte High School where he excelled in sports and academics. Mike attended the National Hardwood Lumber Association Lumber Inspection School and was hired right after graduation by our Company in January, 1981.

Over the years, Mike has been a lumber piler on our sawmill green chain where it was not unusual for him to hand stack over 10,000 board feet of lumber in a single shift. He has managed our shipping warehouse, been our sawmill lumber inspector, inspected incoming truck loads of lumber to qualify it before sale, and assisted walk in customers to find what they need for their projects.

In our Charlotte Office hang 23 NHLA Inspection plaques identifying the date of a National inspection due to our challenging a lumber delivery from a vendor. NHLA rules allow a transaction within 4% of value. We have never lost a challenge. Of the 23 inspection plaques on our wall, Mike is the challenging inspector listed on 17 of them. With a stellar record like Mike's, we can be confident in offering our customers the 100% satisfaction guarantee we do.

I would be confident putting Mike along-side any Hardwood lumber inspector in the United States and they'll either agree with each other, or Mike will be right.

Mike and I grew up around each other as first cousins. I remember enjoying many family gatherings with him at our Grandparent's farm house. I feel very fortunate to have Mike on our team at LLJ. Thanks Mike! ■

Contributed by Mark Johnson

WOW! DID YOU KNOW...!

■ The mighty oak is the species of tree struck by lightning the most. Hmmm, didn't the ancient Greeks considered oak trees sacred to Zeus, god of thunder and lightning...

■ Bigleaf Magnolia leaves can be 7" to 12" wide and 12" to 32" long. Perhaps Adam and Eve would have been more comfortable wearing these...

Scott will be sharing his ideas at our Wood Expo, Saturday, Sept. 12, Charlotte MI. We, along with Scott, look forward to seeing you there.

With a stellar record like Mike's, we can be confident in offering our customers the 100% satisfaction guarantee we do.

L.L. Johnson Lumber Mfg. Co.
& Johnson's Workbench

563 N. Cochran Ave.
Charlotte, MI 48813

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HAS ARRIVED!**

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- INTERVIEW WITH SCOTT PHILLIPS
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L.L. Johnson Lumber Mfg. Co
& Johnson's Workbench
563 N. Cochran Ave.
Charlotte, MI 48813
Phone: 517-543-1660
Fax: 517-543-7180



Johnson's Workbench
South Bend
51315 Indiana 933 North
South Bend, IN 46673
Phone: 574-277-8350
Fax: 574-272-8798



Johnson's Workbench
Grand Rapids
1038 Burton SW
Grand Rapids, MI 49509
Phone: 616-245-9545
Fax: 616-245-9546

CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

HOPKINS WOODWORK

Steve Hopkins can produce 20-30 lineal feet of a custom pattern in the time it takes a moulder operator to grind a set of knives.

Steve Hopkins (Hopkins Woodwork) is an accomplished woodworker of over 46 years. Starting at age 16, picking up a family trade that skipped his parents generation, Steve acquired some hand tools that had been in the family for generations. He started by building furniture, but over the years Steve has made everything from guitars to foundry patterns. As well, he turns from galley rail spindles to porch columns, 12"x8'.

Certainly Steve's best showcase to date was the transformation of the former Jewett Funeral Home in Mason, Michigan to a "better than new" condition. With some 6000 board feet, Steve made everything from the floors up, and in a fashion comparable to the time it was built.

Buying #2 common & better stock (typically stickered & dried together, #3 & below was left green for pallets)



he found his cuttings between the defects for each piece he had to manufacture.

Steve's skill with hand planes was an essential part of this undertaking as he can produce 20-30 lineal feet of a custom pattern in the time it takes a moulder operator to grind a set of knives. Steve really enjoys his old tools not because of their value as collectables but they were a great value when he needed them.

Today he is shifting some of his time to fairs, steam shows, and antique markets displaying not just his tools but his skills as well and is having so much fun in the public eye that his thoughts are leaning toward doing some educational shows. Come visit with Steve at our Wood Expo, Sept. 11 & 12, Charlotte MI, and tap that wealth of knowledge he has to share. ■

Contributed by Chris Fletcher