Spring Dealer Sale and Auction

March 14, 2015  Damascus VFD Hall

Every spring now for the past two decades, tool collectors and antique enthusiasts have descended on Damascus, in upper Montgomery County, Maryland. After the hardest winter in the Mid-Atlantic in years, at least as far as snow goes, everyone expected the PATINA tool show and auction to signal the REAL beginning of spring. Fortunately, the weather cooperated and temperatures were reasonably comfortable allowing good participation in tailgating on Saturday.

As is our custom, the Dealer Sale opened at 8:00 AM for Early Birds, followed at 9:00 AM by open doors and free admission for all. The items auctioned beginning at 2:00 PM were available for viewing beginning at 9:00 AM. See the Treasurers Report on Page 13 for details of the spring sale and auction.

Next Meeting July 12, 2015

Gretchen Goodell-Pendleton, Curator at Stratford Hall- Thomas Lee Home, Birthplace of Robert E. Lee. Gretchen will talk about the mill, the carpenter shop, and news and upcoming events at the plantation. Several PATINA members provided tools and built benches at the shop- as representatives of M-WTCA. Perhaps she has some additional needs we could provide?

DIRECTIONS AND MAP TO THE MEETING HALL

American Legion Post 270, 1355 Balls Hill Road, McLean, VA 22101
A. The beltway from Maryland. Take Exit 44 (VA 193; Georgetown Pike). Cross over I-495 to the first light (Balls Hill Road). Turn right, go 1.4 miles to the meeting hall.
B. From inside the beltway, going north on the GW Parkway. Take the McLean Exit (Chain Bridge Road -Dolley Madison Blvd, VA. 123). Proceed on Dolley Madison Blvd about 4 miles to Old Dominion. Right about 1/2 mileabout 1/2 mile to Balls Hill Road. Turn left and go about 1/2 mile to the meeting hall which will be on the left.
Kaare Loftheim Presentation  
May 17, 2015  

Chairmaking  

Fine chairs are objects of beauty and serve an essential role in domestic and commercial use. But what exactly makes a chair pleasing, and how did earlier craftsmen find the right artistic and construction secrets that all the best examples of chair making exhibit?

Who better to discuss these questions than a master cabinetmaker and chair maker who has spent over 20 years studying fine chairs made in America throughout the past several centuries. Kaare Loftheim has repaired and reproduced classic Williamsburg and Norfolk chairs as Master Cabinetmaker in the shop at Colonial Williamsburg. He has worked in the Cabinetmakers Shop in Colonial Williamsburg since 1980, where he supervises the work. His initial education was a major in biology and minor in chemistry. He served several years in the early 70’s with the U.S. Army in Germany, and then returned to his alma mater in Missouri where he earned a B.S. in industrial technology and art. In 1979 Kaare returned to Virginia where he was raised. During his years with Colonial Williamsburg he has participated in most of the annual woodworking symposiums, and been a guest with Roy Underhill and Bob Vila. He occasionally teaches privately and especially enjoys hands-on instruction with small groups.

In presenting Kaare walked through the steps involved in designing and building a chair – from selecting the right wood stock, designing and making patterns to guide dimensioning and preparation of parts, through carving, shaping and finishing the piece.

For the presentation he brought a copy of a partially disassembled chair from the Governors Palace made by the third Master Cabinetmaker of the shop in Colonial Williamsburg. Using the disassembled chair, and overlaid shapes on a corresponding photograph, he illustrated how to begin designing a piece by measuring the height of the seat from the floor (usually +/- 17”) then multiply the distance by 1.25 to find the distance from the seat to the crest of the seat back. The height of the front frame gives both the height of the splat and the width of the seat. These and other dimensions derived from the key measures provide pleasing and natural appearance - but how were these rules found? Might it have been happenstance or long trial and error that gave chairmakers the right prescription. Or, does nature offer natural shapes so obvious man simply couldn't help stumble on them. The answer to this is of course nobody really knows, however, it is safe to say the laws of proportion have been around since ancient times.

Look at the famous Da Vinci drawing of The Vitruvian Man, from around 1490. It is accompanied by notes based on the work of the architect Vitruvius.
Ancient designers had worked out these concepts much earlier evidenced by surviving buildings from earlier times. Both men believed that the same principles should be used when designing buildings.

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**The Ancient Mystery Schools**

Schools established to preserve natural and spiritual knowledge of physical and ethereal spaces. Theosophists believe this process repeats itself through masters who periodically appear to revive and refresh knowledge for mankind when ancient mysteries are lost. Pythagoras (518 BCE) was one such master who established a school for pure mathematics in southern Italy where he initiated disciples into knowledge probably developed much earlier by Egyptian and Indian thinkers.

For more on this see The Mystery Schools by Grace F. Knoche. Copyright © 1999 by Theosophical University Press.

http://www.theosociety.org/pasadena/mysterys/mystsch1.htm#chapt

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Leonardo tried to take these ideas further, and spent much of his life searching for connections between the structure of the human body, and other patterns in nature. Elsewhere in his notes, he proclaimed that “Man is the model of the world.”

Vitruvian Man may also give us an insight into another problem that occupied Leonardo for much of his life; that of ‘squaring the circle’. This involves drawing a circle and square that have the same area without measuring. Some argue that this diagram shows that Leonardo had a sophisticated understanding of the problem, which other mathematicians would not develop until much later.

Application of these concepts to chair building were clearly presented by Kaare in illustrations of the side chair he brought to visualize design principals underpinning best practices. Notice the dimensions of floor to chair seat height, and the width of the chair seat give very pleasing image due to 1:1.25 proportioning. Similarly, the height of the seat to the crest rail follows this same law, that is, the height is 1.25 the width of the seat.

The vertical extension on the back of the seat rail is referred to as the shoe. This can be shaped as part of the seat rail itself, or more commonly, it is a separate piece attached on the top of the seat rail. Much of the work at Colonial Williamsburg involves reproducing examples of period work and Kaare has found splat backs are not so straightforward to copy. Doing so involves making an exact pattern for the entire object -- it is not as easy as making a partial pattern of one side and flipping it over to complete the entire form. Once shaped and embellished with piercing and carving, the crest rail is mortised with a 1/4” or 3/16” chisel to accept the splat. This joint should be left unglued to prevent splitting as the spalt reacts to movement caused by environmental changes. A spot of glue in the center may be used to secure the spalt and keep it from shifting.
In English side chairs the crest rail flushes with the front of the back legs. Throughout evidence of fine work leaves no seams in the joints which should appear as if they grew together. The only visible difference at joints should be a change in grain pattern which will appear under a fine finish of shellac with a top coat of varnish.

Another tip for chairmakers is to avoid making through mortise tendons especially in the back legs. Experience has shown these weaken the legs considerably. Philadelphia chairs made in the colonial period sometimes were made with a mortise cut through the stock. Occasionally these burst whereas chairs made with 5/16” tenons inset in closed mortises are more durable and reliable.

On choosing stock for chairs Kaare begins with 8/4 mahogany and shapes parts using saws, planes, and spoke shaves. The back legs are resawn into 1 5/8” stock with vertically oriented grain. After resawing stock sometimes warping occurs. The goal for fixing warping is to remove moisture from one side to allow the board to relieve stress. Wetting twisted stock and clamping it in a frame can solve minor problems, but more resistent deformations need longer periods of time in water and clamping systems.

Instrument makers boil wood for about an hour to remove twisted boards before clamping, although boards for instruments tend to be relatively thin compared to most chair parts except the spalt.

Before the middle of the 18th century the back legs of side chairs were typically parallel to one another but after that most side chairs began to exhibit spalyed legs. This creates a tight angle as the stretchers come from the front frame to fit in mortised back legs. Cutting the mortise for these tenons offers a choice to angle the mortise or angle the tenon. Machine made tenons are thought to be easier to angle and fit into straight tenons. Kaare prefers to angle the shoulder of the tenon and match the angled mortise which he cuts with an English mortising chisel.

Hide Glue

Hide glue is the preferred adhesive for conservationists and favored by contemporary craftsmen due to its superior durability and reversibility. The advantages of hide glue include a liberal open time, and its ability to clean up from joint squeeze out to preserve clean surfaces and accept finish. Reversing hide glue can be achieved by applying heat in the form of hot water or steam. Steam works faster, as quickly as a matter of hours, while hot water must be applied over several days.

Temperature affects hide glue and its window of adhesion. On a cold day hide glue freshly drawn from the glue pot may remain open for only 30 seconds. Once the glue becomes gelatinous it will not adhere to the wood fibers and must be reheated before using it to secure joints.

Assembling the Side Chair

Once dry fitting the chair parts successfully Kaare checks all joints and begins verifying the piece is level and square. The back legs must be in the same plane, the seat rails must be angled correctly to reveal the proper spread at the front of the seat. Imperfections in these measurements and angles must be corrected by...
trimming the tenon shoulder pieces until all pieces fit with accurate angles allowing proper dimensioning of the seat spread. If joints become too loose it may be necessary to glue back the trimmings, recut to improve the fit, and recheck all dimensions.

Once all rails and legs are fitted the entire chair must be clamped at one time and final trimming is finished to ensure a tight fit. All angles and diagonals are checked and must be to 1/8” of the pattern dimension to consider the frame acceptable.

Completing the splat piercing and carving is done after the chair is glued up so the splat itself is firmly held between the seat rail shoe and the crest rail. If using machine tools to shape or pierce the splat some work needs to be finished prior to glue up. When using hand tools much of the splat work can be completed after glue up.

Once the frame is assembled it is possible to determine the length of the stretchers. The English Side Chair pictured opposite has a H-stretcher pattern where the cross member is set back from the front legs. Builders in the 18th century typically cut tenons with only one shoulder for the stretchers. This simplifies dimensioning and cutting stretchers between the front and back legs. The cross stretcher forming the H pattern is cut with half dovetail to allow it to be fitted after everything else is glued up.

Finally, the back surface of the rear legs are rounded off by a #15 or #16 Hollow leaving a 1/8” profile.

Seat Framing

For slip seats, that is seat cushions upholstered over a frame rather over the side rail, care must be taken to build very sturdy frames capable of withstanding intense pressure. Linen rolls are cut to size and nailed to one side of the seat frame, rolled over themselves several times, and pulled taut with upholsterers pliers. Next, horsehair is pulled inside the linen webbing until it achieves desired cushion. Finally, the show cover of fabric or leather is applied over the frame completing the seat.

As told by Kaare Loftheim, "You should start your first set of chairs with a full head of hair because you will pull half of it out by the time you finish."
Sources of shellac for restoration or reproduction can be difficult to find locally, but sources around the country provide excellent products through the internet. One source offers Seedlac which is a high quality form of shellac in seed form imported from India and other southeast asia countires. The following description was copied from the website courtesy of WoodFinishing Enterprises. For shellac and other hard to find finishing supplies check the link below:

http://www.woodfinishingenterprises.com/index.html

Seedlac resin is produced by the lac insect Lachardia lacca, a tiny red insect, not larger than a small apple seed. Lac resin is excreted by the insect and deposited on the trees that it lives on. These trees are called host trees, the most important of which are kusum, ber, ghont, and palas, all of them native to India, Burma and Thailand.

The collection of lac in India is scattered over a wide area. About two thirds of the crop is collected from an area lying between Calcutta and Central India. Smaller amounts are now collected in Burma, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia.

There is a very marked difference in the color of the lac from different areas. The lac from west of Calcutta is yellow or orange in color, that from Kusmi crops is pale yellow and that from others is dark yellow. East and south of Calcutta the lac is red, a pale red in Assam, and a dark red in Thailand.

While the life cycle of the insect produces two crops each year, there are numerous subdivisions of the entire lac crop, the most important crops being Bysaki, Jethwi, Katki and Kusmi.
As mentioned above, Kaare uses hand tools exclusively to restore or reproduce chairs in the shop at Colonial Williamsburg. In addition to the saws, planes, and spoke-shaves, he mentioned the special importance of mortising gauges and chisels. Side chairs require at minimum 3 or 4 separate mortise chisels. These chisels define the pin width for the mortises to be chopped in the legs. Kaare prefers English mortise chisels - which serve as both a knife and a pry bar.

In the 18th century blacksmiths made chisels by hammer welding small wedges onto iron shanks. The high carbon steel wedge was then fitted to an approximate width and filed to size.
Interview with John Davis

Barry Ingram

The following article is republished from The Wooden Word, the periodic newsletter of the Washington Woodworkers Guild. See this and other content from the June edition of The Wooden Word at the Guild website: http://washingtonwoodworkersguild.org

In each issue of The Wooden Word, we will have an interview with one of our long-time members. We were privileged to have John Davis step up this month.

**John, tell us a little about yourself.**

I am married to my high school sweetheart and we have two awesome daughters. In high school, I wasn't highly motivated academically but I won the Industrial Arts Award for my Senior Year project- a walnut curio cabinet. I joined the USAF after HS, and then went to U of De and GWU for degrees in Electrical Engineering. I am an engineering lab manager at BAE Systems, where we design computer chips and build computers that can survive the harsh radiation environment in space, including the computers that ran the Rovers on Mars. I hope to retire and be a full time woodworker.

**When did you join the Guild, and why?**

I joined the Guild in ~1983 when I heard from a colleague that Tage Frid would be holding a weekend seminar in the shop of a member. It turned out to be Hugh Belton's shop. At the time, I was making Danish style furniture so I was thrilled to be in the seminar. I learned about the Guild at that event and seeing the work done by Hugh was amazing. The Guild met at Once a Tree, the commercial co-op shop in Shirlington and it was interesting to see what the professionals were doing and how they did it. Eventually, I was the Guild's Program Director and Vice President. I started the Guild's participation at the National Building Museum in 2000, and it still runs today- thanks to Bill Walmsley and the members who continue to support it.

**Besides the Guild, what other woodworking related organizations are you involved with?**

I am one of the early members of SAPFM, the Society of American Period Furniture Makers, Program Director for PATINA, and a member in the Mid-West Tool Collectors Association, which is a nationwide and international tool club with over 3000 members.

**I know many of the WWG members refer to you as the “Tool Guy”, but I also know you build beautiful furniture and collect tools for your-self. Tell us about some of your projects.**

I've made craft objects and furniture from a variety of styles but I think my skills were advanced significantly when a group of WWG members put together the period furniture classes, starting with a Newport shell carving class, then a Newport chest, and ultimately a Newport Secretary. (The latter was featured in FWW issue 144). We then did a Boston Bombe Chest, and other period pieces. I'm currently building two contemporary bedroom chests of drawers to match the bed and night stands that I made for my daughter. The casework is made from Narra, and the drawer fronts are from a piece of spectacular spalted maple.
How long have you been involved in woodworking?

I claim that I started woodworking when I was seven, when my Dad let me drill holes in a board, using his Black & Decker ¼” drill. I can still see my Mom and Aunt panickedly telling my Dad that I would get hurt or electrocuted. Thankfully, Dad didn’t listen.

What future projects do you have planned?

I’m interested in reproducing an 18th C navigational instrument and a tall case clock that I measured a few years ago. I have done almost no veneer or inlay work, so I would like to stretch in that direction and I have some projects in mind.

Did someone influence you?

My Dad and my Uncle had a few woodworking tools and my Uncle made an outstanding Mandolin. Their uncle made violins. I expect that seeing their work and the admiration that they received had an impact. My woodshop teachers realized that I was a serious student, so I got plenty of support from them. Guild presentations and the annual Woodworking conferences at Williamsburg were very helpful. Without question, my skills were expanded mostly by Allan Breed, who coached the Guild guys in the Newport classes. Allan went on to start The Breed School for woodworking and donated a couple of course slots to WWG to show his appreciation. I highly recommend WWG members take courses with Allan.
Do you read any particular wood-working publications?

Currently, I only subscribe to FWW, and Joel Jacobsen's email list!

Tell us a little about your work-shop and favorite tools.

My shop is in my basement so its HVAC controlled. My bench was handmade, beech with a Walnut wrap, Veritas Twin screw and an Emmert vise. My favorite tools would be a surprisingly humble list of tools that I grew to appreciate when making the Bombe Chest: Stanley No. 18 bevel square, 151 Spokeshave, No 20 compass plane, No. 5 Jack, a Lie-Nielsen 164 low angle smoother, and a couple of back saws for dovetails. I like Swiss Made gouges because of the numbered octagonal handles and their sharpness when new. The best accessory that I have is a pair of Heine HL 1200 long goose-neck lamps that are originally medical and so they are ridiculously overpriced. (Best to find an equivalent that isn't specifically for the medical field, or surplus).

Any other tools you would like to have?

There are some amazing vintage tools and new tools that I would like to have but I’m not craving anything specifically. I like to find wood planes, saws, and hand tools made locally, i.e. Washington DC, Baltimore, and Virginia.

Do you currently have any special interests?

When my wife once said I was spending too much time in the shop and out hunting tools, I suggested that I would quit and take up golf. She immediately said I could continue with the woodworking and tool hunting. I think those two special interests are enough for me.

Barry's note:
Most times, we see John at our WWG meetings or at a Patina meeting, trading, selling and buying good hand tools of many times and ages. If you need any hand tools, or advice on tools, John is the perfect person “to see.”
News From Washington Woodworkers Guild

Brian Sause, Labs Director from the Hardwood Plywood and Veneer Association (HPVA), is coming to town to talk about how some of this plywood and veneers are made and used, with some tips on purchasing and using plywood and veneers. The meeting is scheduled for June 16 at 7:30 PM at Goodwin House, in Bailey's Crossroads, VA.

Meetings are normally held on the third Tuesday of the month (except August) at 7:30 pm at the Goodwin House Bailey's Crossroads in Falls Church. A typical meeting consists of a business portion to discuss the status of the club, upcoming events, group book & tool purchases, and other Guild activities. The business portion of the meeting is then followed by a 'Special Program' highlighting some new aspect of woodworking for skill enhancement and education.

Ships, Clocks, and Stars: the Quest for Longitude

Hugh South

PATINA members living or visiting in the Baltimore-Washington area should consider seeing the latest exhibit at the Folger Shakespeare Library, “Ships, Clocks, and Stars: the Quest for Longitude.” The exhibit was developed by the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, and it celebrates the 300th anniversary of the British Longitude Act of 1714. This act offered huge rewards for any practical way to determine longitude at sea, a problem that required 50 years to solve. The exhibit traces the solution to this problem. The Royal Society London and the Museum of Archaeology Cambridge also provided exhibits.

Included in the exhibition are marine chronometers such as John Harrison’s H4 marine timekeeper, the culmination of his life’s work in measuring time at sea. Also included are early navigation instruments such as octants and sextants, original astronomical tables from Astronomer Royal Nevil Maskelyne, a first edition of the Principia Mathematica by Isaac Newton, the earliest surviving portrait of Galileo, and artifacts brought back by Capt. Cook from his voyages in the Pacific. Additional information may be found at http://www.folger.edu/exhibitions/ships-clocks-stars-the-quest-longitude.

The Folger Shakespeare Library is located at 201 East Capitol Street, SE, Washington, DC 20003. The Folger is four blocks from the Capitol South Metro stop on the Orange, Blue, and Silver lines. Exhibit hours are Monday–Saturday: 10:00 am–5:00 pm and Sunday: 12:00 pm–5:00 pm. The exhibition runs through August 23, 2015.

English Mortise Gauge
PATINA Meeting Dates for 2015

The scheduled meetings for 2015 are:

January 18
May 17
July 12
September 13
November 15

Hugh South
Secretary/Treasurer

PATINA Elections of Officers

Elections for the Officers will be held in September 2015. PATINA relies on volunteers for all its activities. Interested members willing to volunteer to serve as an Officer should contact Jim Glass. You may also nominate someone who you feel is able to make a contribution to our organization by serving a term as an Officer.

The position of Treasurer requires some qualifications and usually the Treasurer serves an apprenticeship to become knowledgeable about the financial operations of the organization. According to the bylaws, the election of the President and the Secretary/Treasurer occur in alternate years; that is, these officers serve staggered terms. Therefore, Hugh South will continue serving as an Officer in this role until 2016.

John Davis has generously volunteered to assume the role of Program Director. As such, John will be placed on the ballot as candidate for 1st Vice president. Nominations are solicited for President and for the Membership Chairman. The positions of President and 1st Vice President only require a willingness to serve and contribute to the organization. So, if you want to acquire a position of envy among your colleagues and seek the glamour and celebrity of an important role in Washington civil society, by all means form your committees and consider a run for office.

Hugh South
Secretary/Treasurer

PATINA Spring 2015 Dealer Sale and Auction
Treasurer’s Report

INCOME

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NET INCOME $1,333.73

The Spring 2015 Dealer Sale and Auction was again a successful fund raising event, though less successful than last year’s event. Income from table rentals was down a little compared to 2014. Auction sales were also lower, largely because the average price per lot fell to $22.63 over 335 lots in 2015 compared to $43.49 over 295 lots in 2014.

PATINA owes considerable thanks to Dave L. Murphy and his team for handling the Dealer Sale and arranging for rental space and tables. The club also owes special thanks to Sam Pickens and his assistants for staging the auction on a greatly compressed schedule, including arranging for space to sort the auction lots. Dave, Sam, and their teams devoted substantial time and effort for the benefit of the club.

Hugh South
Secretary/Treasurer

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PATINA Programs - 2015

Plans are firming now for an exciting and informative set of programs for 2015. The lineup for 2015 is looking like the following:

**January 18, 2015**

Bob Roger, Staunton VA- Tool Challenge. Bob will bring 50 or so odd tools and challenge members to guess what they are. Bob leads the What's It team for M-WTCA. John will bring tally sheet and we will give a prize to the winner. See the full program announcement above.

**May 17, 2015**

Kaare Loftheim Master Cabinetmaker at Colonial Williamsburg will present a program on chair making. A repeat guest, Kaare's presentations are always first class and greatly appreciated by PATINA.

**July 12, 2015**

Gretchen Goodell-Pendleton, Curator at Stratford Hall-Thomas Lee Home, Birthplace of Robt E. Lee. She will talk about the mill, the carpenter shop, and any news/events at the plantation. Several PATINA members provided tools and built benches at the shop-as representatives of M-WTCA. Perhaps she has some additional needs we could provide?

**September 13, 2015**

Bill Adair, Gold Leaf- Demonstration of guiding materials, methods, and special techniques. Gold Leaf studios DC

**November 15, 2015**

Chris Bogart, Luray- Renowned Bamboo Fly Rod Maker

Plays also include Peter Ross, Colonial Williamsburg blacksmith, for a special event- day long demo at a location to be determined. Keep checking the PATINA website for information on this event, and all the upcoming presentations for 2015.

CRAFTS Meeting Announcement

We are honored to host Tony Passarelli as the featured speaker at our June 7th meeting. Tony is a highly skilled craftsman who makes custom Windsor chairs, using traditional methods and woodworking tools. Tony began making antique reproduction furniture in 1993 for his own use. He made his first Windsor chair in 1996. Subsequently, he has made approximately 250 Windsor Chairs.

Tony has refined his skills over the years and continues to work with the respected master chair maker and tool author, Michael Dunbar of Hampton, New Hampshire. Michael is the founder and head of the Windsor Institute, the only school dedicated to teaching the art of making Windsor chairs. Tony has shared his knowledge as the demonstration craftsman for Elfreths Alley Association in Philadelphia (Windsor Chair Makers Home) from December 1999 to June of 2012.

This promises to be a great hands-on presentation, and a perfect follow-up to the Duckloe Furniture Bros. Company, which emphasized the company's four generation tradition, the physical plant, the management and employees and their production techniques. Whether you attended that trip or not, you won't want to miss this meeting.

We look forward to seeing you two weeks from now and would like to wish all of our CRAFTS members and their families a happy and healthy Spring/Summer,

Stew May, Membership Communications
Bob Garay, President

Meetings are held at the Masonic Lodge, Ridge Road & Dennis Ave, High Bridge NJ 08829.

Directions:
Take I-78 or Rt. 22 to Route 31 exit at Clinton. Go north on Route 31 two miles to second traffic light (sign for "High Bridge"). Turn right and go about half a mile to Dennis Avenue. Turn left on Dennis, then two blocks to the Masonic Lodge (on the left). Tailgate sales in the parking lot begin at 12:00 PM (most time earlier:); meeting starts at 1:00 PM and ends about 3:30.