



CAPITAL AREA WOODWORKERS

WOODSHOP ADVISOR



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Upcoming Meetings

Tuesday, November 6, 2012
Social Time and Dinner 5:15 to 6:30
Meeting starts promptly at 6:30)
MCL Cafeteria
2151 Wabash Ave
Springfield, IL

Program

**The manufacture of jigs
and their use**

by: Mike Cortelyou

*Members are asked to bring their
favorite jig so everyone will be
involved in the presentation.*

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Oct. Meeting Notes

By Dick Metcalf

Bob Wire opened the meeting at 6:30.

- Bob reviewed the planned day trip to Effingham proposed for Columbus Day, October 8th—the date selected by the officers. He encouraged the members to sign up either at the meeting or by email. Drivers will be needed.
- Norm Koerner gave his recommendations on what to see and do while on the trip.
- Ric Thompson spoke on the Sister City Program. A grant has been obtained and Ric is one of four individuals going to Japan on Oct. 22. He will be making contacts for a cultural exchange to see if a delegation of woodworkers from Japan will visit the U.S. and a delegation from the U.S. will go over to Japan. Since it is a tradition for visitors to give gifts when visiting Japan, Ric asked us to donate to him a small (palm sized) gift to take along. Ric's deadline for receiving gifts is Oct 20.
- A Guest tonight from the Chamber of Commerce is Diane Rinehart. Other guests are Dale Fitzpatrick, Dick McClain Ken Stion, Dennis Greg and Bob Bastias.

Tom Wegman, President of Stevens Industries, Teutopolis, presented the program.

Tom began by giving us some information about his company and what they do today. Tom has been with the company since 1970. He started as an engineer and today is Chairman of the Board. Teutopolis is an unusual town. It has a population of only 1200 but yet has 3 major employers. Chuck Stevens started the business in 1956 making wood cabinets in his garage. At that time laminate cabinets were being proposed by others when Stevens made the decision to make laminate cabinets. However, making them with his present machinery was not practical. A completely different thought process was needed. Planers, joiners, table saws and other traditional woodworking tools were not useable; new machinery was needed. Stevens made the decision to go to Germany, Italy and Japan for the machinery to do frameless construction (flat panel processing) and to the design a new factory. The new laminate cabinets would be built on demand; there would be no storing of finished product. Stevens designed some 27 different cabinets in hundreds of colors which could be modified to meet customer specs. and was one one of the first in Illinois to use this type of manufacturing process. The factory was designed entirely for using the metric system. Talk around the factory was using millimeters, centimeters, centigrade, kilograms etc. Tom said he has been to Europe and Japan at least a hundred times. Pre laminated flat panels were made from melamine. Stevens machines produced an overstock of panels so the company became a distributor of laminate parts needed by others. Parts for such things as office furniture, doors, kitchen items and many other things. Today, Stevens produces fifty percent of their end product as panels and components sold to others. The other fifty percent is making commercial case goods to be sold to schools, hospitals and others.

The press used to make melamine parts runs at about 400 degrees farenheight and produces 400 pounds of pressures. The process causes cross linked chemicals to melt and bond together. The machine runs fast and if it didn't the company doesn't make any money. The laminates show beautiful wood grain patterns. (Cont'd next page)



The concept is not to replace wood but to provide a substitute for those who can't afford the natural product.

Early on in the companies use of the European machinery, Stevens could compete easily with others to provide the commercial demand for their product because few companies had the same capability. Today, it is much more difficult to do this. There have been a lot of good years as well as lean years.

Finally, concerning the anti-business climate that exists throughout the country today, Tom said, Illinois has one of the worst. We could never start up another business like the one we're in today with all the regulations we have. What is meant by anti-business climate? It starts with the sentiment in Washington DC and then with the Governors of certain states. It is most difficult for business when the EPA comes in and shuts a plant down for minor infractions or makes frequent visits to check on emissions and requires much paper work. This EPA stuff has just slipped by Congress and trust upon us. Then, there is the unknown factors of Obama care. No one knows where we are going to be in the near future on that issue. The business growth in Illinois is forth from the bottom according to a recent article. Seven factories that were selling panels in Illinois are bankrupt or gone. Everyone in the laminate business is terribly scared of anticipated higher taxes. Our company is just hanging on; we have no growth.

Show and Tell

George Wilber showed a table he made from trees dug out by hand on his Grandfather's property. The table was made in 1943 while George attended high school. He used very basic tools to construct it and hide glue to hold it together. The table has resided in George's house for most these years since.

Did you see the Table saw laminate which was auctioned, after the meeting? It apparently was picked up by someone to be saved and I didn't get to take it home after making the winning bid. **Dick**

Wednesday, December 5 Annual Christmas Party

This year the Christmas party will be held at Bella Milano, 4525 W Wabash on Dec 5 at 6:00 PM. There will be 6 menu items ranging from \$16.41 to \$31.56 (includes tax and tip). There will be door prizes for members, gifts for their significant others, musical entertainment. RSVP by Dec 1 to Bob Wire at 529-4436 or rdw1938@gmail.com.

