Brandon Woodworkers Club Newsletter February 2026

Let's Get Started

This month's meeting started at 7 PM with the Pledge of Allegiance led by Mark Corso, followed by the invocation from Dave Merrill. After the invocation, Tom Bolen reminded everyone to sign in and get a "sign-in" raffle ticket from Ken Coleman.

Club Business

- As always, a special thanks to Rockler for allowing us to use their facility.
- Tonight, we are going to begin simulcasting the presentations to the Rockler TV screens so all can get a better view of the action. Thanks to Caleb for making this happen!
- We always want to add new pictures to the website. Don't be shy, send your pics.
- **Shop tours:** We need volunteers! It is a great time of the year while the weather is still cooler. Please consider hosting club members to come out to see where your magic happens. Tours are typically a couple of hours in the morning on Saturdays.
- We have added the membership directory to the website. We will discuss access and additional features as we go. For now it is simply names and email addresses.
- **Tool Loan Program:** The program is now open for business. We have a Festool Domino and it is ready for loaning. The club also owns a Dewalt 735 planer, purchased by the club from Rockler. We are as always open to suggestions so please offer your ideas. A suggestion was made to purchase an assortment of router bits – this makes sense and we would like your opinion. In addition, we will gladly accept donations of any woodworking tools that makes sense for this program. Rick Williams has agreed to be the keeper of the tools. If you wish to borrow a tool, please make a request through the club officers

(bwcofficer@gmail.com) – not to Rick directly – and the officers will get with Rick. The club will put out a detailed email on the process of loaning out tools. The club has added a Waiver and Release from Liability form which you must sign to participate in the Tool Loan Program. It is necessary to protect the club and its members. A copy is posted on the protected area of the website to sign and bring in. Please get your signed copy to our treasurer, Ken Coleman. This is a simple form used by similar clubs; it is just basic, common sense.

- It is time to renew your club membership; $35/year, cash or check made out to Brandon Woodworkers Club, and it includes your family. Membership includes a 10% discount on Rockler products, Intercity Lumber and Hardware, Hardwood Lumber and Millwork, Triple L Rustic Designs, Central Florida Live Edge Slabs, and Ropers Saw and Tool Sharpening. It is also a good time to sign the Waiver and Release from Liability form.
- Club by-laws will be edited and posted on the BWC website; officers will serve two years before an election.
- BWC will not have an official presence at the State Fair this year. Time in the past has not proven cost effective in gaining new members. However, if you wish to volunteer for a shift or two, see Robert Babbitt.
- The Woodcrafters Club of Tampa has changed location and times: 2nd Thursday of each month at Tampa Covenant Church, 13320 Lake Magdalene Blvd, Tampa, FL 33618. The doors open at 1800 and meeting begins at 1900.
- One last item to discuss – Tom's early show and tell. Caleb had an accident where he was using his bandsaw when the utility voltage dropped and came back quickly causing the saw to grab the wood in an unexpected manner. Tom's work experience involved motor controls for industry and he decided to take on the challenge of trying to design a means to prevent this from happening – see Show and Tell for the solution.

Presentation

Tonight, the club is adding real-time videography to the presentation. Caleb added a straight-on camera from his position and an overhead camera at the scroll saw to be broadcast on Rockler's left and right TVs. This will give those at off-angles and in the back a chance to see the presentation. We hope this will greatly enhance your presentation viewing.

Figure 1 Dave Merrill

Dave Merrill (Fig 1) is an accomplished scroll saw craftsman who will demonstrate several of his skills tonight.

He starts off with a series of questions. Who owns a scroll saw? Lots of hands. How many use it? Fewer hands. How many use it all the time? Still fewer hands. How many think it's too slow? Now down

to a handful. Dave says one thing about using a scroll saw, “If you’re in a hurry, don’t bother. Scroll sawing is not a hurry game, it’s a lesson in perseverance.”

There are a lot of scroll saws on the market, but the one Dave is using is a Bushton Hawk (Fig 2). Bushton bought out RBI, which had been in business for 75 or 80 years, but went out of business in 2014. RBI built the Hawk machine. They built them in three different sizes through different generations, from AC controllers to going to a DC motor. These, the Hawks, are all DC driven so when you step on the foot control you have a minor delay, but that's to save the motor. And they run wonderfully.

Figure 2 Bushton Hawk scroll saw

The Bushton runs off a DC motor with an offset wheel on it and then a pitman arm, so that gives us its up and down motion, which gives the illusion of it revolving, but it's not. The DeWalt runs off a cam, which is how a lot of them work, and they work well. Other scroll saw companies include – list not inclusive – Seyco, Aecusa. Hegner, Wen, Delta, Jet, Craftsman.

We like to say that we like to keep things as they were. Unfortunately, as generations pass and technologies change, these machines took the place of another machine, the fret saw (Fig 3), or for bigger pieces, the deep throat fret saw (Fig 4). Fret saws are a good backup in case things don’t go the way you want. Fret saws are widely available in various materials, sizes, and cost.

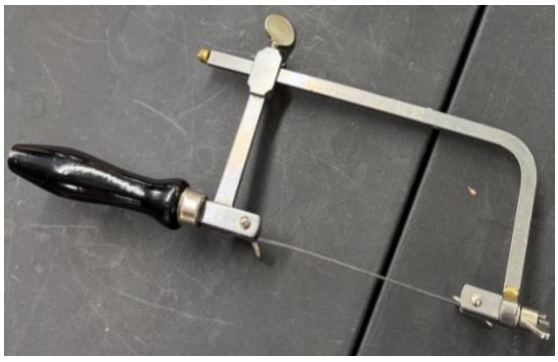


Figure 3 Fret saw

Figure 4 Deep throat fret saw

Scroll Saw Blades

The standard length for a scroll saw blade is five inches – Dremel makes three- and four-inch blades for its Moto-Saw series. There are two major kinds of blades – pinned and pinless (aka plain-end) (Fig 5). You do not want a pinned one if you can help it. If you're just going to cut out silhouette types of things like model cars for kids, stuff like that, they'll do wonderfully. If you're going to do any kind of inside cutting work, they're not worth anything because you must drill a hole so big to get the pin through, and then they're hard to load. Look carefully and get non-pinned. There is a slew of blade manufacturers, such as Flying Dutchman, Olsen, Pegas, Niqua, ScrollAmerica, and Wen.

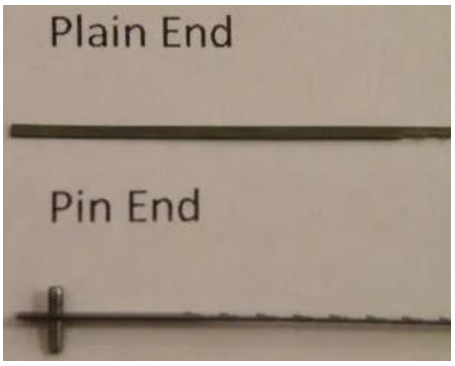


Figure 5 Unpinned and pinned blades

Main Scroll Saw Blade Types (Fig 6)

- Standard Tooth: All teeth are the same size and spacing; standard for many wood and metal cutting tasks. Dave uses an XL blade made by Flying Dutchman. He likes that they have a machine set to them like your cabinet saw so you do get a little wider kerf but they cut very smoothly inside the cut.
- Skip Tooth: A versatile, general-purpose blade with wide spacing between teeth, which keeps the blade cool and reduces burning.
- Double-Tooth: A skip-tooth blade with sets of two teeth, designed for slower, smoother cuts on harder or thicker woods.
- Reverse Tooth: Similar to skip-tooth, but with the bottom few teeth pointing up, preventing splintering on the underside of the workpiece, making it ideal for plywood.
- Ultra Reverse (aka Crown) Tooth: Similar to the reverse tooth design, a crown tooth blades cut both on the up and down stroke.
- Precision Ground Tooth (PGT): Skip-tooth blades with teeth ground to shape rather than filed, offering superior sharpness and accuracy.
- Spiral: Features teeth arranged in a spiral pattern, allowing cutting in any direction without turning the wood. Ideal for intricate, large, or detailed fretwork.

Figure 6 Scroll saw blade types

Blade Sizing and Selection (Figs 7, 8)

- Sizes: Indicated by numbers ranging from 3/0 (finest) to 12 (coarsest), with smaller numbers for intricate work and higher numbers for thicker, harder materials.
- Material: Carbon steel is common, while bi-metal or carbide blades are used for tougher, harder materials.
- Tension: Proper tension is essential; too little causes wandering, too much causes breaking.

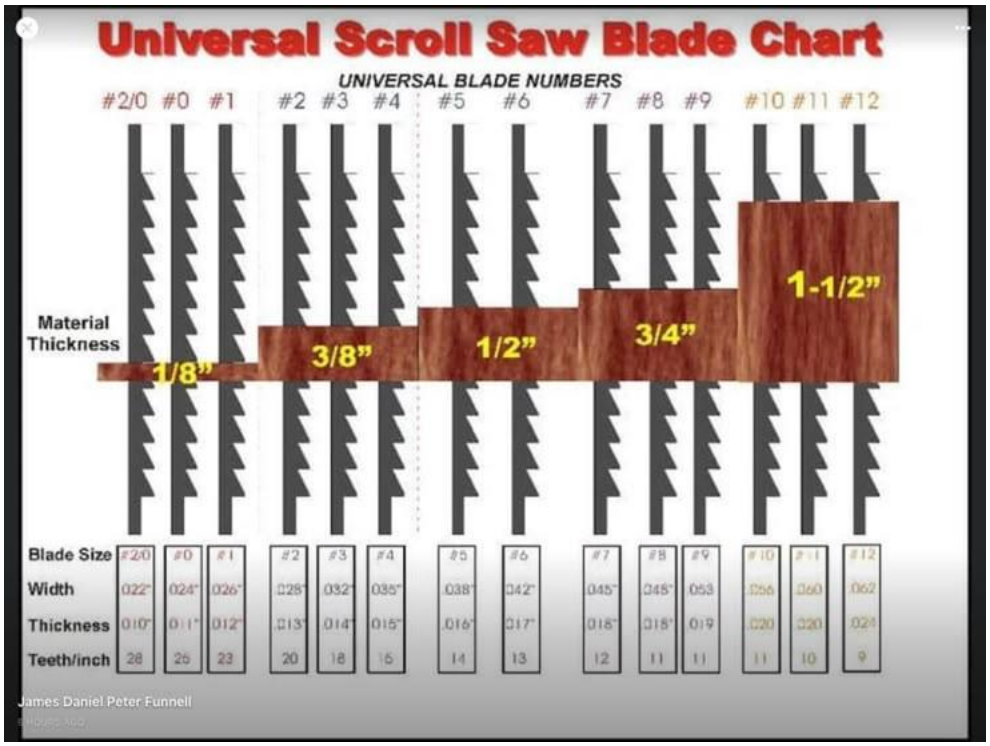
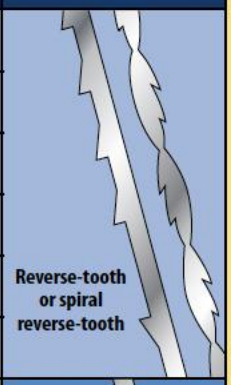
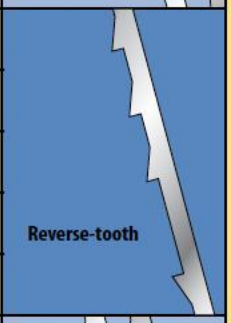
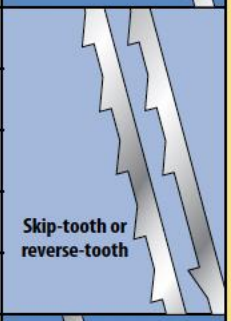
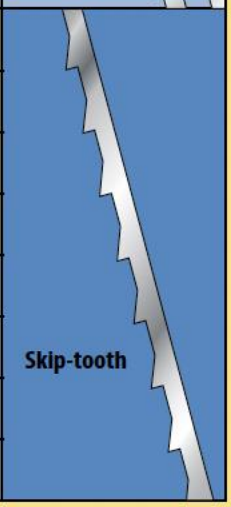


Figure 7 Scroll saw blade chart

Scroll Saw Woodworking & Crafts

Never Fail Blade Chart

Project	Material*	Thickness** (or overall thickness of stack)	Blade Size	Tooth Configuration
 FRETWORK & PORTRAITS	Hardwood, softwood, plywood	¼" or thinner	#2/0 to #1	 Reverse-tooth or spiral reverse-tooth
	Hardwood, softwood, plywood	¼" to ½"	#1 to #2	
	Hardwood (less dense), softwood, plywood	½" to ¾"	#3 to #4	
	Hardwood (dense)	½" to ¾"	#4 to #5	
	Hardwood (less dense), softwood, plywood	¾" to 1"	#4 to #6	
	Hardwood (dense)	¾" to 1"	#5 to #7	
 PUZZLE	Hardwood, softwood, plywood	¼" or thinner	#2/0 to #1	 Reverse-tooth
	Hardwood, softwood, plywood	¼" to ½"	#1 to #2	
	Hardwood, softwood, plywood	½" to ¾"	#3 to #4	
	Hardwood (less dense), softwood	¾" to 1"	#4 to #6	
	Hardwood (dense)	¾" to 1"	#5 to #7	
 GENERAL	Hardwood, softwood, plywood	¼" or thinner	#2/0 to #1	 Skip-tooth or reverse-tooth
	Hardwood, softwood, plywood	¼" to ½"	#1 to #2	
	Hardwood, softwood, plywood	½" to ¾"	#3 to #4	
	Hardwood (less dense), softwood, plywood	¾" to 1"	#4 to #6	
	Hardwood (dense)	¾" to 1"	#5 to #7	
 COMPOUND	Hardwood (less dense), softwood	¾" (19mm) to 1"	#4 to #7	 Skip-tooth
	Hardwood (dense)	¾" to 1"	#5 to #7	
	Hardwood (less dense), softwood	1" and thicker	#7	
	Hardwood (dense)	1" and thicker	#9	
 INTARSIA & SEGMENTATION	Hardwood (less dense), softwood	½" to 1"	#3 to #6	
	Hardwood (dense)	½" to 1"	#5 to #7	
	Hardwood (less dense), softwood	1" and thicker	#5 to #7	
	Hardwood (dense)	1" and thicker	#7 to #9	

* Dense hardwood includes species such as maple or oak. Less dense hardwood includes species such as cherry or walnut.
** ¼"=6mm; ½"=13mm; ¾"=19mm; 1"=25mm

Figure 8 Never Fail Blade Chart

Dave defaults to the Flying Dutchman XL for scroll saw blades. Each blade is graduated in the size of the curve and the size and width of the blade altogether. Whenever you read them, depending on which blade you want to pick up, different manufacturers have different tooth counts in those blades. There isn't enough time to discuss that, that's a whole other session. As you get into it, and depending on what kind of work you want to do, you're going to gravitate to one kind of a blade or another. Generally, if you go to those manufacturers you can get whatever you need.

Fret and Coping Saw Blades

Fret saw blades, commonly five inches in length, are sized by numbers ranging from 6/0 (superfine) to #12 (thick/coarse), with smaller numbers indicating finer blades for delicate work and larger numbers for thicker materials. Sizes like #2/0 or #1 are ideal for fine fretwork and marquetry, while #3 to #5 are versatile for general, thicker wood cuts. Coping saw blades, on the other hand, are almost always pinned and are almost universally 6-1/2 inches in length from pin to pin. They are designed for fine, intricate, or curved cuts in wood, with common tooth counts ranging from 10 to 20 TPI (teeth per inch) for wood, or up to 32 TPI for metal.

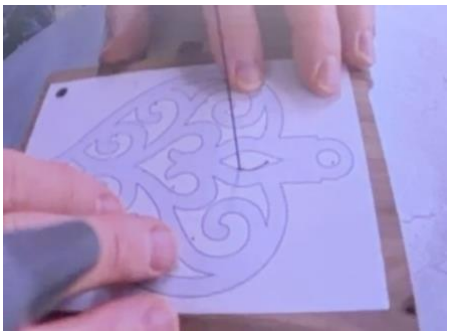
Patterns

When it comes to different kinds of patterns, Dave does fretwork almost exclusively. Other patterns include intarsia, marquetry, parquetry, and geometric. He has a friend who does nothing but intarsia. He also has friends who do both fretwork and intarsia. If you want a general pattern to cut out little birdhouses and whirligigs, and things like that, Winfield Collection (thewinfieldcollection.com) and Cherry Tree Toys (cherrytreetoys.com) makes a lot of them. If you want simpler patterns, then get them for free. Dave mentioned Steve Gooden who runs Scrollsaw Workshop (scrollshopworkshop.blogspot.com) and has hundreds of free patterns. He also has a free program called Stencil Maker with which you can cut out letters. Dave also mentioned that Steve was in ill health and, unfortunately, passed away 2 March.

For more detailed types of work, Sue Mey at scrollsawartist.com, has a wonderful website. Most of her patterns you can buy, they're not expensive, are anywhere from $3-$20. Higher end and more expensive are Cherry Tree Toys and Finescrollsaw (finescrollsaw.com). and then there's Sheila Landry at sheilalandrydesigns.com. They all have different patterns of different quality and different degrees of difficulty. You can do anywhere from a fine Ferris wheel to a simple toy.

When selecting blade sizes, charts are a good guideline when buying blades. However, you need to account for intricacy of the pattern, thickness and hardness of the material, grain, and the ability to make a turn. You also need to think about how the cut will look on the bottom. Generally, when you get a pattern, those things have been taken into account and will tell you that it's for quarter-inch to three-eighths or whatever. Have patience.

These are some of Dave's patterns and completed fretwork. They came from patterns he got from books, magazines, and the internet. So, how do you get a pattern on a piece of wood? You can trace the pattern with carbon paper, inkjet transfer, or print it out and glue it to the wood. Dave uses spray adhesive, 3M 45, but 3M doesn't make that anymore; 3M 77 works well. You can clean it up with mineral spirits and it won't affect the wood color. Fabric adhesive for upholstering is another choice.



Drill bits for fretwork can range from an eight to a sixteenth for general fretwork, or for finer work, much smaller bits called microbits. Microbits are numbered from 52 (1/16”) to 72 (~1/64”) and can be bought from the manufacturers that make scroll saw blades or their suppliers. You will need to use a drill press to keep the hole straight and less likely to break the bit. You’ll probably have to buy a chuck No. 0 to make sure the chuck jaws zero out around the bit shaft. Rule of thumb for drill speed, the smaller the bit, the faster the speed. To get the bit from the chuck, try lightly tapping the chuck with a screwdriver. You don’t want to hit it hard and knock it out of alignment. Depending on what you’re working on, when you drill a pilot hole, make it as small as possible and get it as close to the pattern line as possible.

If you’re considering entering fairs or competitions, know the rules. For example, the Florida State Fair rule says that any fretwork on fine furniture can’t be more than 25%, so the corner piece is not an accessory but fretwork. If the corner piece had solid sides, it would be an accessory. And the rules may change as time goes by.

When you’re ready to scroll saw, preparation is key to success. Preparation involves stabilizing the machine to minimize vibration, square the table to the blade (you can check it with a credit card), set the tension, select the right bit for a pilot hole and a blade for your material and position the blower or hook it to a vacuum. You also want to make sure your wood is clean and flat, the design is transferred and you have the proper safety gear and adequate lighting. Finally, have a comfortable seat, unless you’re going to stand. The only way to learn is by doing – lots and lots of hours of doing. And have patience. Two of the hardest things you’ll have to do are saw in a straight line and not get too far ahead of yourself. Don’t let your eyes wander too far down the line. If your eyes wander, your blade wanders.

Scroll sawing is a popular and rewarding woodworking hobby that blends artistic expression with precision craftsmanship. It is widely enjoyed for being accessible to beginners while offering endless complexity for experienced crafters.

Newcomers/Visitors

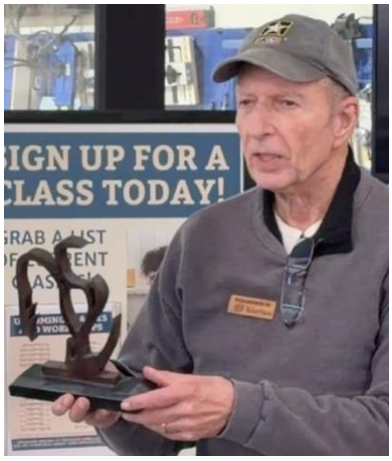
The club welcomed Noel.

Show and Tell

Alright, let's get to everyone's favorite portion of the meeting.

Rich Nannis

Richard made an abstract Valentine's Day piece for his wife from purple heart with a shellac finish. It's of two people kissing with a heart in the middle. It was his own design and he thought he'd surprise her but she saw him making it and wondered why he was making three. So, it was a surprise. Rich said it really came out nice and he was proud of it.

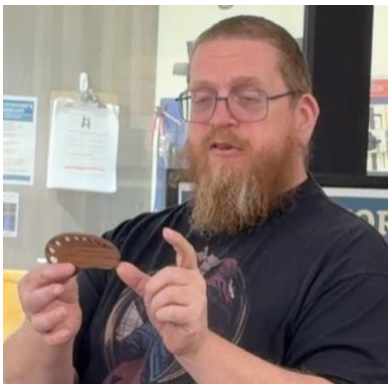


Stacey Rhody

Stacey's daughter is getting married at the end of March. She calls him and said she'd like him to make her an envelope box with a lock on it. He said he wouldn't put a lock on it. After some back-and-forth, what she really wanted was a wine and wine glass holder box. Stacy made one from curly cherry and everything inside is lined with felt, the same kind he's used before. There is padding under the felt and the blocks are wrapped so the glasses and wine bottle fit snugly and won't fall out. He laser-etched a copy of the wedding invitation into the mirror – looks very nice. He used 300-pound steel cable to limit the range of the lid to the box. He finished it with four coats of lacquer.

Conrad Wheeler

Conrad is slowly getting his hands back into working with machinery. He made a birch push stick using a DeWalt push stick as a template, and a page holder and herb stripper from walnut picked from the large scrap wood bin at Rockler.



Aaron Harrigan

Aaron made a chessboard from redheart, purpleheart, walnut and epoxy with a butcher block oil and wax finish. He planed it himself and went to sand it when he realized he had left his batteries at his new home in Lakeland. Ken Boyd helped Aaron with that. The tinted epoxy turned out much pinker than planned – he accidently knocked the bottle of tint into the epoxy. Just another unscheduled learning opportunity!

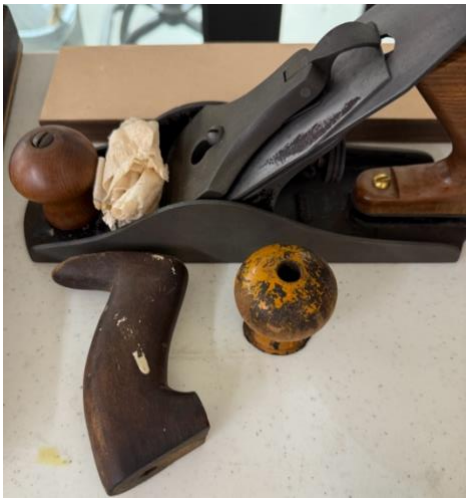
On a separate note, Tom Bolen made a Brandon Woodworkers Club brochure box to sit on the counter at Rockler. Aaron, and Ken Boyd, laser-engraved the Beaver logo on it so the box is now finished. Gotta love teamwork.

Tom Bolen

Tom made a momentary start/stop button as a motor control safety feature made from a relay switch and two push buttons. The switch senses a loss of power and opens the circuit, interrupting power to the machine. To reestablish power to the machine, you must manually press the Start button to close the circuit and get power, so there is no chance of a sudden power surge turning the machine on unexpectedly. It cost him $31 for the parts from Amazon. Tom made this after he heard Caleb had an accident when his band saw had a power fluctuation. The sudden power drop and unexpected surge caught Cable's hand, resulting in six stiches in his thumb. Tom made the safety control for Caleb and used that situation as a talking point and safety reminder at the meeting. The safety switch is small and portable so one can move it from machine to machine as necessary. Tom has a diagram showing the electrical connections for anyone wanting to build one.

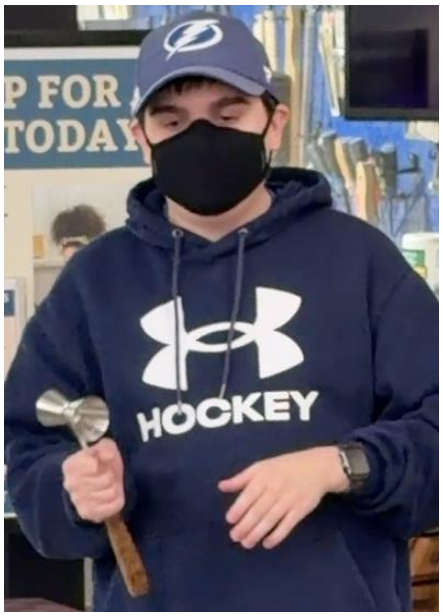
Robert Babbitt

Robert refurbished a hand plane he got from Jeff Futch. Robert replaced the front knob and rear tote, which were from rosewood and finished with shellac.



Caleb Nixon

First of all, congratulations to Caleb for winning 1st prize at the state fair for his lion head intarsia. Caleb turned a red oak handle that he burned to bring out the grain and then he finished it with CA glue. The jigger he bought at Rockler.



Jeff Futch

Jeff makes bandsaw boxes and this time he brought nearly the whole block of wood. When he starts out making the bandsaw box, he cuts the outside shape and then he has leftovers. This box had four sections: the top; the tree of life; and, two lower drawers. All the drawers come out either side of the box. The whole box was made from sweetgum and red oak burl with black walnut drawer pulls and finished with TotalBoat's Wood Honey.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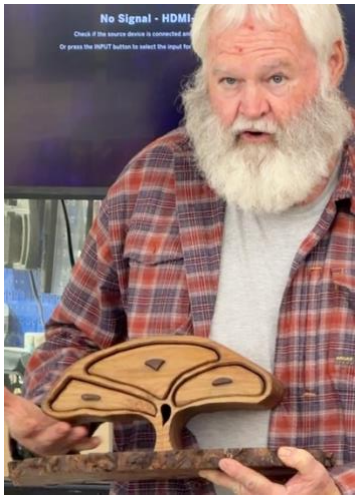
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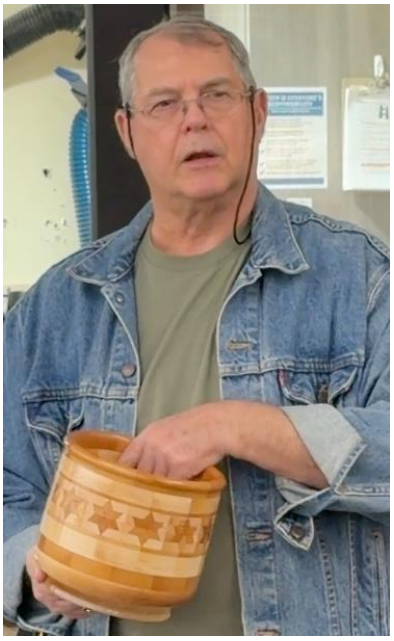
Jim McCullagh

Jim made an American flag in honor of America's 250th anniversary from hard maple and bloodwood with a Minwax Helmsman finish for outdoors; he's going to hang it on the house. He found the bloodwood at Craftsman Supply and the hard maple at Rockler. While at Craftsman Supply, a guy from his bible study walked up and they talked about what Jim was making and the guy said he had a CNC machine and would love to cut the stars for Jim. Jim asked if the guy had ever done that and the guy said no, but they went ahead and he did an awesome job. It took about an hour and 40 minutes on a CNC after it was programmed. The CNC used an eight-inch bit and a 60-degree bit to cut the stars. The flag has 10 coats of Helmsman to weather the elements. While Jim was finishing with the Helmsman, he started counting the stars. At three brush strokes per star point – 50 stars with five points each is 250 – is 750 brush strokes per finish, times 10 finishes is 7,500 brush strokes on the stars. That's a lot of patience and attention to detail, and it shows.

On a side note, Jim got Best of Show at the state fair for a bowl he'd turned and had brought in for a previous Show and Tell. Way to go, Jim!!

James Jordan

James turned a segmented bowl from cherry and birch with a polyurethane finish. The feature ring is the stars, with each star segment made from 14 different pieces of wood.



Ken Boyd

Ken made three children's toy helicopters from birch and walnut; a salad bowl from black walnut with a mineral oil and beeswax finish; and, salad bowl utensils from birch and laser engraved, and finished with mineral oil.

On a separate note, Ray Penn turned pens for each employee where Ken picks up the free birch wood. Ken is going to laser engrave each pen with an employee's name. Thank you both for a very nice gesture.

Bill Reasoner

Bill made a cutting board as a Valentine's gift and to honor their 30th wedding anniversary!! It's made from padauk, birch, walnut, and purple heart and finished with beeswax.

Mark Corso

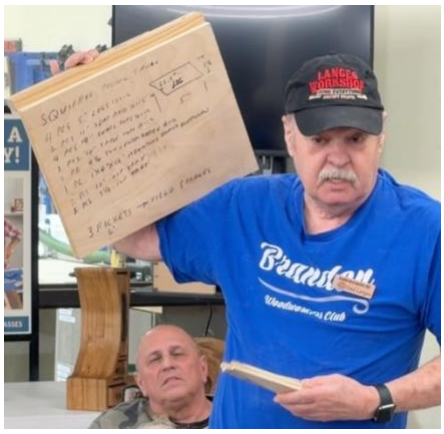
Mark said, “Sometimes you just want an easy project, a quick win, so I made some kitchen utensils all out of birch wood, kenwood.” He made a grill grate pusher/puller, spatula, and salad/spaghetti hands.

Rick Ward

Rick turned two two-tone bowls. The first is a large one from a crotch piece of monkeypod and a second, smaller one, from rosewood, both finished with spar varnish. The large blank Rick got from Triple L Rustic Designs when they first started selling bowl blanks. He wanted to include the section of bark but it needed to be stabilized, which he did with Z-poxy and a toothpick, working the glue behind the bark. Depth of the bowl was another challenge. He wanted to keep as much of the two tones as possible – too deep and you eliminate a lot of the darker tone. The base isn’t finished. If he goes too deep, he’ll pop through the bottom. He’ll probably just put a shallow indentation for the base. The second bowl is rosewood, which looks a lot like monkeypod. It also is finished in spar varnish, but the process was not without challenges. Rick said the spar varnish, and maybe other finishes, interact with the rosewood. He let the first coat dry for over two weeks but it still wasn't dry so he sanded it off. Then he used mineral spirits and wiped out some streaks and put a second coat on it. After a week of drying, the wood was sealed. Even then, sanding it, it wasn't quite dry. Then he put the third coat on, thought it was dry, and it still had a few smudges in it. It’s beautiful wood and it will be part of his personal collection of bowls. And another lesson learned.

Fred Langes

Fred made five squirrel feeders from three fence pickets. He made his first one five or six years ago and on the back of the clamping fixture, he wrote down the materials list – a brilliant idea. The fixture is a layout template and clamp to size and hold the various pieces until the table is complete. He uses wedges to clamp the table down to put the top on. He recently made five in no time.

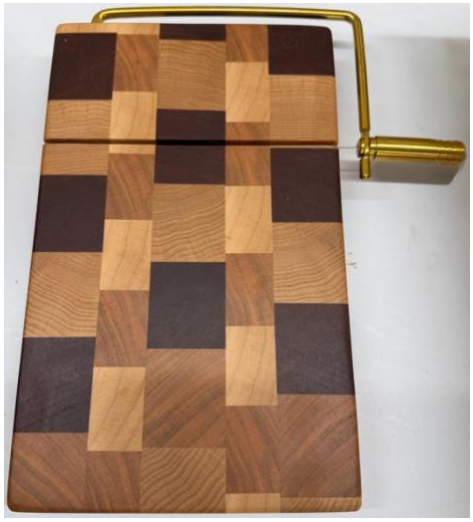


Bruce Woody

Bruce turned a lot of peppermills over the Christmas holidays. This one is salt shaker and peppermill combo with an internal mechanism from Penn State Industries. It has an Odie's oil finish. Bruce got the wood from Bill Powell, a former club member who passed away several years ago. Bill found a thick slab coffee table with a broken leg off the side of the road. The wood is a burl of some mystery wood. The salt shaker/peppermill combo is not yet finished since Bruce is still working to get it just right. On the small cutoff, Bruce got sparks when he hit the dark spot with a chisel. He has no idea what it is, but he said it didn't feel like metal; maybe it's an inclusion.

Ray Penn

Ray made a cheese cutting board with wire slicer from a kit at Rockler. The cutting board was made from scraps from other cutting boards. Ray turned walnut handles for a garlic press; the handles are epoxied on.



Ward Gannon

Ward is in the middle of making a new desk. Last month when he saw Rick do his presentation on turning pens, Ward got all fired up and made eight pens. His nieces came to town and took almost all of them so Ward had to make two more just for tonight's presentation. So, he was all fired up to make pens, but a buddy of his who'd passed away a couple years ago, his wife called and said they were getting rid of the butcher block counter in the kitchen and asked Ward if he wanted it; Ward said, "yes." His buddy had treated the butcher block so nicely with mineral oil that it took Ward about 30 hours to get all the oil out of a large slab of butcher block. He brought in the drawer he'd made for the new desk. The drawer sides are made from solid birch with a walnut butcher block front. As he got ready to paint the surface, he noticed oil oozing from the wood. He put a heat gun to it and it bubbled up so he put down baking soda and it dried off for a second. Ward thought he was okay and let it sit; the next day, it was dried out, or so he thought. There was still oil oozing from the edges. After nearly 30 hours of labor to get the oil out, the desk was ready for finishing. He finished it with urethane.

Rossie Knighton

Rossie made a balanced mobile from leopard wood with a spray polyurethane finish. He thought it was be relatively easy to make. He used the mechanical advantage calculator, which turned into a quadratic equation to balance the mobile. All that didn't work but he got it balanced somehow through trial and error.

Club pictures

Reminders

Thank Yous

A BIG thank you to Rockler

To Sherry, Diane, and Joe, we

And the Winners Are

$10 Rockler Gift Certificate for attendees (sign-in tickets) – Rick Weigand
$10 Rockler Gift Certificate for Show and Tell – Ward Gannon
$15 Rockler Gift Certificate for Show and Tell – Rick Ward
$25 Rockler Gift Certificate for Show and Tell – Richard Nannis
50/50 (for the big moolah) - $70 Fred Langes

Meeting times

The BWC meets the 2nd Tuesday of the month at Rockler Woodworking & Hardware, 169 Brandon Town Center Dr, Brandon, FL 33511, 813-793-6030. February's meeting will be the 10th from 7-9 PM.

Newsletter by John Bacca
AV support by Conrad Wheeler

Club Officers

Tom Bolen, President
John Bacca, Vice President
Ken Coleman, Treasurer
Holly Bentley, Secretary