

No. 20

February 2009

Welcome all New Subscribers!

## My World....Ready to Rock!

I'm writing this about a week early as I'm in **Rock & Roll** mode (FINALLY!!). I coerced some family members to spend the day with me and get my shop clean. We moved a lot of stuff out of the way and a I now have a fresh outlook.

We've got three of four video players up on the [new web site](#) and have a lot of neat enhancements for you once we get the basic stuff transferred. The last player to go on-line is the project video player and we hope to have it cooking really soon. When that player goes live we'll be able to broadcast the "Hancock Shaker Clock" project.

Speaking of our web site, have you checked out our **Weekly Contest**? Our great sponsors provide prizes each week that we give away to you guys. The contest runs Monday through Sunday and details are available from our web site splash page. A new prize every week and we've got some super cool stuff coming up - like a [Worksharp](#) Sharpening System, a \$25 [Woodcraft](#) Gift Card, a \$25 Gift Certificate from

[Horton Brasses](#), a special bit set from [Eagle America](#) and a lot of great Pinnacle and WoodRiver products from [Woodcraft](#). But in order to win, ya gotta enter. Visit the web site and check it out.

## My Daily Blog

Are you a frequent visitor to [my blog](#)? If you are then you already know that we



have several projects going on in the workshop. I'm finishing some painted cabinets and I have started a cherry, Slant Front Desk. For those of you who don't read the blog, you might want to check it out. It is the one place you can follow the daily activities of what is going on at my workshop.



While I have the desk going, I am also starting a "Jefferson Seed Press." It's a walnut piece that Thomas Jefferson had for storing his seeds. He was a huge gardener. Rumor has it that his love for gardening is the main reason we have tomatoes in America. Story has it that he needed a special cabinet for seed storage. The piece is more like an armoire and would have a lot of practical every day use, so stay tuned.

I'm gonna be honest, the blog is kind of a hassle and takes a couple of hours a day for us to bring it to you...but it allows me to share with you my daily happenings, good or bad. I have found that since I have crafted so many pieces through the years, that writing about it as I am building allows me to share with you a lot of tips and techniques that I maybe take for granted. Your feedback keeps it going.

I'd like to extend another invitation to you to join the [forum](#). Use it, it's there for you. A lot of you have put up photos of projects, please feel free to do likewise.

## In My Opinion....

Like a lot of you, I've been listening to the news, actually, something out of the ordinary for me. Considering the other viewing options, it's about the best comedy/drama that's on.

The only thing I have greater disdain for than a liar and a thief is someone who tries to pee on my leg and tell me it's raining. That's exactly what got me into all of this video/public woodworking stuff. I got tired of hearing folks tell others all this nonsense just so they could look intelligent or the ones trying to impress someone who doesn't know better! Come to find out, it's not just in woodworking, it's in everything. In my opinion, in these economic times, it's futile to see who's to blame, but important to find out the cause, then just FIX IT, without all the extra nonsense.

Trying to prevent greed and corruption is not an easy task because in this economy everyone is looking out for themselves. That's just pretty much how it is and it's not getting better. Folks are going to do whatever they can to protect themselves and their families, and you know the rest of that story.

## The Finish Line

While most of this and pictures are on the blog, I wanted to draw your attention to our painted cabinets. Paint is returning as a very popular finish, and rightfully so. It allows for diversity.



What is your definition of paint? For



most, it's a brush and roller, thus leaving a very "textured" surface. That's not my definition. Mine is "smooth & slick", like an automotive finish without the high gloss.

So in finishing these cabinets, we are going to do it two ways. First we are using a water based paint, in our case "[General Finish Milk Paint](#)". It goes on super nice, brush or spray and is very durable. My only issue with it is that it has a very dull sheen, so I'm going to topcoat it with some "[High Performance](#)" clear coat to add more protection as well as give them a satin sheen.



The dominant reason for doing this is to show you how you can use a common latex paint (or in our case the "[General Finish](#)" line) and get a super finish.

### Brushing a Painted Finish

While we have been spraying everything, you can certainly brush it on, just use a good [synthetic brush](#) for water-based, not natural hair, and simply paint it. Be particular and keep a nice wet edge as you paint and don't over-brush. Get as even a coat as possible, then sand between the coats with some 320 grit sandpaper. It

usually takes at least 2 coats to get good coverage. Then use 320 and sand it again to a nice flat level surface and then apply the top coat. In our case, we'll be spraying the water-base top coat. After sanding the paint, be sure you don't have any sand-throughs and if so touch them up.

While the sanded paint will look dead and flat, the clear topcoat will bring it right back to its color and add the sheen. All we are doing is using the paint as our color base.

The second option is using a pigmented topcoat. This is color and finish all-in-one. There are both solvent and water-based versions. We will be using the water based. We will simply apply the product and we are done. The folks at General Finishes can make you about any color you want. A chip or color number from a paint manufacturer is all they need to mix the color. In special cases, you may need to send them a color sample or chip, their minimum is one gallon. Visit their [web site](#) or call them at 800-783-6050.

In either the first or the second procedure, painted finishes need not be inferior in durability or appearance. The same as making primitive or rustic looking furniture not being an excuse for poor craftsmanship, painted pieces are not an excuse for a poor finish.

If you want more detail about these cabinets you can follow them on the

blog. We used some pine plywood for material, some auto body filler, did a [Timbermate](#) grain fill and some Zinsser BIN sealer, all to create a nice surface from which to start. A smoother surfaced plywood or solid wood would have required less work, but the end result should be a pristine finish. Here is one last tip. BIN sealer, available from most box stores as well as hardware stores is a white pigmented shellac base primer/sealer and it does quite well as an MDF sealer. A good coat of shellac or BIN is a good place to start your finish. With the BIN, to have a nice, white uniform base insures better coverage and even color. It also prevents anything from bleeding through your finish.

Check out our "Finishing MDF" and our spline trick to reinforce the screw holding capability of MDF - all recent posts on [my blog](#).

## Last Man Standing

I'm an optimist, except when I get angry, then maybe not.

One of the distinct advantages of being self-employed is that you can make changes that best fit your needs. Like when we saw economic situations we didn't like and we decided to down-size, or looked and thought that perhaps the internet could help generate furniture sales, or that perhaps, just perhaps making DVDs of woodworking could

help generate revenue and then thinking that perhaps looking for some select sponsors to further the educational thing to help us all, they all proved to be good decisions. Each was also a risk but no single risk would have been devastating had it failed. That's also how woodworking is. You learn step by step, "Sneak Up On It," if you will.

We are fortunate that we don't have all of our eggs in one basket, but I must say that it takes all the various eggs to make breakfast and like every one of you, we struggle to make ends meet. There is usually a lot of month left at the end of the money.

Last year we approached some folks about helping sponsor all this, we got commitments and every thing was in place for January 1, 2009. Well, that date finally came and all of a sudden, budgets were being frozen and being re-done, cutting whatever they could. We were certain that we would be cut. While not a lot of money, it was still money, so we just let it ride figuring what would be....would be. We told them all that no matter the outcome, sponsor or not, we would continue to use their products, "Good Stuff is Good Stuff." I've told you before, the sponsors are our choice, not because their willingness to sponsor but because I know and use their products and have for many years, which is why I chose these manufacturers to be sponsors.

As I often do, I said all that to tell you this, First, we haven't lost a single sponsor, actually gained some. I mentioned this last time, they seem to like what we are doing and they are starting to see the value of the video thing vs. print. But more to the point is that they have all tightened their belts and settled in for the long haul, a smart move.

Many will not survive all this and that is fact. We all see it and unfortunately, the strongest will survive.

In my world, furniture makers/cabinet makers, pretty much anything related to woodworking, they are closing doors one after the other. Saw mills, wood brokers, you name it....but the ones who are able to ride the storm will be on top, like Forrest Gump and his shrimp boat.

We have had a lot of furniture commissions which we found surprising. They are actually up. I haven't yet figured out if it is the internet thing or just a lack of options, but I'm grateful. Our DVDs have been low but steady and I'm very thankful.

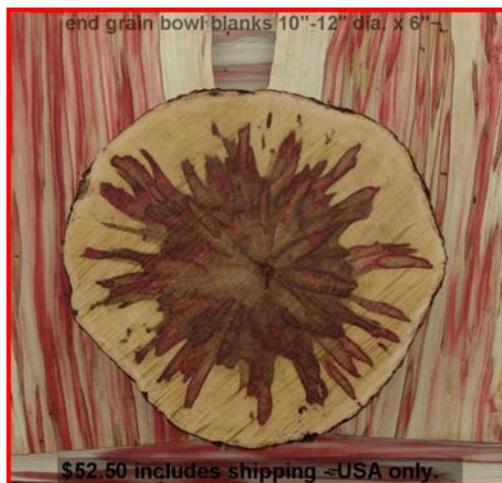
This woodworking thing is a tough business and it has gotten tougher. It all depends on us. If we want to see it survive, we have to support it. We also must be careful. I see things on the forums where folks have ordered wood and never received it and now, no phone, email...just gone. So be

careful, deal with folks you know and can trust.

If I may, I will make a prediction. In 12 to 18 months, your purchasing options will be dramatically reduced and it will go from a buyer's market to a seller's market. I've been saying this for months, I talk to these guys, I know times are tough and scary, but this is a buyer's market and not only is it one of the best times to buy, it's also needed to keep things alive.

Think about it.

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Sawmill  
Kehoe Jig

Box Elder - End Grain Bowl Blanks  
Short Log Rounds  
approx. 10" to 12" x 6"

~~\$57.50~~ **NOW \$39.50**

*includes shipping*

[CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS  
AND TO ORDER](#)



## The Tool Crib

### THEY'RE HERE!

I have long anticipated the arrival of the WoodRiver hand planes. I now have them and impressive is an understatement.

I own a lot of planes, Stanley, Lie Nielsen, Veritas, Miller Falls Record. You name it, I probably got one, I'm not a collector nor am I a plane "geek". I can't go rattling off model numbers and all the infamous planes and all.



I'm a plane user, I love nice planes and I know what a nice plane is. The guy at Woodcraft who was primarily responsible for these planes is Tim Rinehart. Tim is an old school, multi-generational woodworker who flat out knows his stuff and these planes prove it. Having access to and understanding the properties of all the famous and respected planes made, Tim has combined all the features that make these in my opinion, one of the best planes on the market today. Just a fact.

When it comes to a tool, Tim is a perfectionist and it shows. From the weight, flatness of the bed, the blade hardness, all are BedRock design. A design that Stanley invented for attaching the "frog" (part that holds the blade) to the bed. It makes for a more precise attachment as well as the ability to tweak the frog/bed alignment and it resulted in a heavier, almost chatter-free plane because it allows everything to be machined to exacting tolerances.

I could do a huge article on this but it shall suffice to say that WoodRiver has succeeded in producing one of the finest planes I have seen at an unbelievable price. They come in a solid maple wood case and are pretty much ready to go to work.

One of my favorite planes that is always on my workbench is a low angle smoother or block plane. I have four of them, several different manufacturers, the WoodRiver beats them all and I've got some really expensive ones.

Last night, Billy dropped by the shop, I had just gotten the planes out of the box. Billy **IS** a plane "geek". He started looking and drooling and "Oh Man!" they do this and they do that! I went and got some tiger maple and birds eye maple. Now these woods do not like hand planes at all! A little tweaking and I had shavings coming off you could read through. That was using the #3, then I got the low angle block out.

Poor Billy. He had just bought one of the expensive bronze ones because he liked the one I had. He paid like more than double the cost of this one. We both agreed, the WoodRiver beat the more expensive plane hands down.

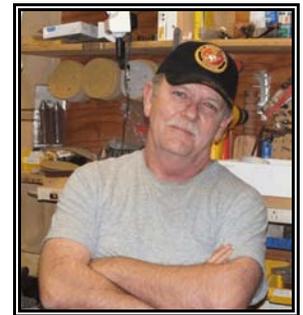
Then we got the #4, #5 and #6 out....same thing. Now in a couple of weeks I'm going to film a video about how to sharpen, set up and use, so if

you have ever wanted a super plane, now is the time.

Here is the link and if you have any questions, let me know.

[Click Here to See WoodRiver Planes](#)

If you have never owned a plane or for just basic shop use, get the Low Angle Block and the #3. The #4, #5 and #6 are super for bigger surfaces and jointing. Check them out, I promise you won't find a better plane at any price



## Craftsman Profile What's Your Story?

Meet Doug from Phoenix, AZ., transplanted from Muleshoe, TX. Doug is a maintenance planner and scheduler for Gatorade. He and his wife Donna have a West Highland Terrier named Mollie. Doug is active on the Lumberjocks forum and follows our videos, blog and web site. I always ask if someone enjoys a certain part of woodworking more than others, usually there is a preference, but not Doug, he loves it all. In addition to woodworking he enjoys bike riding and fishing when his neighbor gets the itch.

Doug tells me that he owes his interest in woodworking to an uncle who was a carpenter. He helped him to build a camper for the uncle's 1967 Dodge Pick Up. He helped frame it out of 2 x 2's, rolled and installed sheet metal, wired, insulated and paneled the whole thing in two weekends and he said it looked like a million bucks. He was 12 at the time and hooked for life.



Doug caught our attention when he sent us an email about some neighborhood kids that woodwork with him.

In an email to us last November, Doug wrote, "When I saw your video with working with the kids it kinda set some things in motion here. What I saw not only inspired me, but it motivated me too. I have two neighbor kids, Joshalynn and William, that poke their head in the shop when ever I have the door open. Curious as cats these two -

after seeing your video I asked them, after talking to mom and dad - if they would like to build some bird houses. I didn't get your kits or anything but we made bird houses over a weekend and had a blast :) We are making a purple heart - heart and a



bandsawn box for the mother for her birthday the day after Thanksgiving."

["Unplug the Kids"](#) was one of the first videos we ever produced and is still on the player today. A cause near and dear to us, getting the younger people interested in woodworking.

By the time I got this story to print though, I have learned that Joshalynn and William had to move because their parents found new jobs.

Doug, thanks for sharing your story.

## Up Top and Down Under and Across the Pond

Hooray! With some recent postal changes, we are now able to ship a small flat rate international package that will hold one DVD set or two single titles for about half the shipping cost. We will be adjusting our shopping cart to reflect these shipping charge changes.

## Thank You

Well, the new web site is up and running - a good thing. I think they are tweaking some still. Again, my deepest thanks to Ken for all he has done.

There is a link at the bottom of our new web site that connects you with Ken should you need a web designer. We certainly could not have made this transition without him and in the long run, he is making Sherri's work load 1000 x less.

The site gets stronger by the day and it is all from the hard work and time Ken has put into making it a better place to visit. We love to process feedback so let us know what you think.

Ken - "you da man" Thank You my friend, you have been a heaven sent blessing.

## CLASSES

I have been reluctant to schedule classes this year because of the economy, I thought enrollment might be down and unless full, I cannot justify holding them, however, we have set dates and provided the classes fill, we will be holding them at our shop in New Market, Virginia.

We have three classes to choose from, Woodworking 101, Woodworking 201 and Finishing A to Z. Synopsis of the classes are posted on our website with the registration information but if you have any questions, please email.

[Click Here to See Class Details and Register](#)

There are limited spaces and the classes fill quickly so if you are interested, please register ASAP.

## Eagle America February Specials

[Visit Eagle's Web Site](#) for more details about the following specials.

Free 2pc. Plywood Dado Set w/  
Purchase of Hardwood Edge Banding  
Bits

Save \$100 on 70-piece Price Cutter  
Router Bit Sets

Half Price! 7-piece Taper Drill and  
Countersink Set for only \$19.99

Lots of new products too.

## DVD SPECIAL February

This month we are offering you a 2 disc set on Oil Finishing before it is retired for good. While filming Finishing A to Z we did 2 hours on Oil Finishes with Bob and Charles, when the set came together this became a stand alone. As we now have the material covered in the large set we have decided to retire this title. We have a limited number available so order early.

Originally \$29.95, you may purchase this title this month for \$14.95 plus shipping.

[Click Here to Purchase Oil Finishes](#)



Catch Ya  
Later!

*We found a passion for woodworking a very long time ago and now have pointed that passion toward woodworking education based on our experience. We try to simplify woodworking so that even the novice may enjoy the hobby and be proud of their achievement and accomplishments in woodworking.*

*As we have grown over the past 18 months, there have been so many people, like you, and companies that have supported our endeavor and continue to do so. I have never wavered from giving you the truth about everything I do and will continue to do so. When a product or company is written about in my articles, it is because I have a loyalty to a good product or business, but...it is not a loyalty that is paid for, so please, never be confused on that.*

PS. Buy something you normally wouldn't, WE ARE the ECONOMY! Buying products stimulates it, think on it!

