



P.O. Box 68343
Nashville, Tennessee 37206

MARCH 2013 NEWSLETTER

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The Cumberland Furniture Guild's Winter Meeting

will be on Saturday, March 16th, 2013 from 2 p.m. until 5 p.m. at the Shop of Andrew Caldwell in Nashville, Tennessee, and will Feature a presentation and demonstration by renowned Wood Sculptor and Furniture Maker Brad Sells.

Brad will make some chips fly and discuss some of his wood shaping techniques. Brad's work is exhibited in a number of museums and private collections throughout the world, including the Smithsonian's Renwick Gallery in Washington, D.C. This should be a great meeting!



*A couple of Brad's recent works:
an Arm Chair in Bubinga and Cherry,
and a Mulberry Vessel from the Georgia
O'Keeffe home in Abiquiu New Mexico.*



Photos courtesy Brad Sells

Directions to Andrew's Shop:

From just South of downtown on **I-65 Take Exit 81 to Wedgewood Ave.** If you are coming from the South turn Right onto Wedgewood, if from the North turn Left on Wedgewood. In 2/10ths of a mile **turn Left on Martin Street.** In 4/10ths of a mile (three blocks) turn **Right on Hamilton Avenue.** In 2/10ths of a mile (one block) turn **Left on Pillow Street.** Andrew's Shop is 2/10ths of a mile on the Left at **1301 Pillow Street, Nashville, TN 37203.** Andrew says we can use the church parking lot next door if we need to. If you need help or directions the day of the meeting please call Dale McLoud at (615) 513-1924.

Letter From The President

By Alf Sharp

My Name is Alf. I'm an Addict

I've been addicted for forty years, and, happily, I'm not cured yet.

You see, I'm addicted to that thrill that rushes through you when you've just solved a crucial problem in the shop, or masterfully executed a difficult technique, or awake in the middle of the night with a fantastic design idea. It's one of the most delightful sensations we're privileged to experience as we ply our vocation. It may come entirely as a result of our own ruminations, or it might come when a colleague shows you a trick he has learned or innovated. Whatever, I guess this is not much different than an adrenaline high.

It's not that there can't be a lot of fulfillment in perfecting a small (or large) production scheme and then operating it for profit and job security. Some people are content to stop there, and rock on for the rest of their existence, and some times I even envy them. But then my addiction starts to rear its pretty head, and I remember why I like custom work so much. You don't get to be a Chippendale or a Castle by deciding to be content with the things you've learned up to now.

The essential behavior needed to provoke that wonderful moment is to regularly stretch the boundaries – of your skills, or your design ideas, or the capacity of your equipment (some of the greatest jigs have come from trying to make a tool do more than its designers ever imagined it might do.)

One of the concerns expressed by those who don't thrive on the adrenaline high is that it provokes risky behaviors. Well, yeah. Not long after I began presenting myself to the buying public as a furniture maker (despite, in fact, only knowing very little about the craft), it became apparent that, to secure work I needed to say I could accomplish the job whether I had ever practiced the techniques involved or not. What would follow were long days and nights of trial and error, some hand wringing and sweaty brows, and the occasional less-than-perfect job. But if you want to learn this skill quickly, I can't recommend a more exciting way.

Another distinctly risky behavior that my addiction has resulted in is my tendency to attempt a new idea or technique on a current project without practicing it first on some scrap stock. This is especially perilous when the project is ¾ complete, and mostly glued together. I suppose this could be compared to the recent sport of free-climbing high cliff faces, except the impact of a serious mistake is slightly less consequential than death.

And so that brings me to an associated skill that one develops when afflicted by this aberrant behavior – fixing mistakes. A well-known aphorism says the difference between novices and masters is that masters

know how to hide their mistakes. This is certainly true, but I would add this corollary: Those who crave the thrill of cheating utter failure get a lot more opportunities to practice this skill. And once successful, one has yet another opportunity to pump his fist into the air and whirl about in the ecstasy of victory.

David Pye wrote about the difference between the craftsmanship of certainty versus the craftsmanship of risk. He concluded that woodworking as a whole was more the latter than the former, but even within that regime some techniques were more risky than others. (We're not talking about personal safety here, but the likelihood that a catastrophic mistake will ruin the piece being worked on.) An example would be free-turning a table leg on a lathe as compared to cutting mortises with an industrial mortiser. He spent some time ruminating on the personalities that choose one or the other type of work. I can't remember whether he ultimately thought more highly of the risk takers or the hide-bound milquetoasts who cringe in the face of failure, but I know where I stand. **Boo-yah! -Alf ♦**

Appalachian Center Exhibition

We are glad to announce that the Exhibitions Committee of the Appalachian Center for Craft in Smithville, Tennessee, through a national competitive selection process, has chosen the Cumberland Furniture Guild to be included in their 2012-13 exhibitions season.

A portfolio of images of our members' work was submitted nearly two years ago, and we have been invited to do a juried exhibition at the Craft Center from August 21st through October 23rd, 2013. Look for a call for entries in the next week or two.



'Shameless Self Promotion' Workshop

The Cumberland Furniture Guild wanted to let our members know about an upcoming workshop sponsored by TACA (The Tennessee Association of Craft Artists). If you're reading this online, click on the image at Right to link to the TACA website where more details, including registration information, is located. It's a wonderful opportunity to help our members understand and learn strategies for marketing our finely crafted furniture.



Ex-Slave Lewis Buckner Loved to Carve—

Just Look at His Furniture!

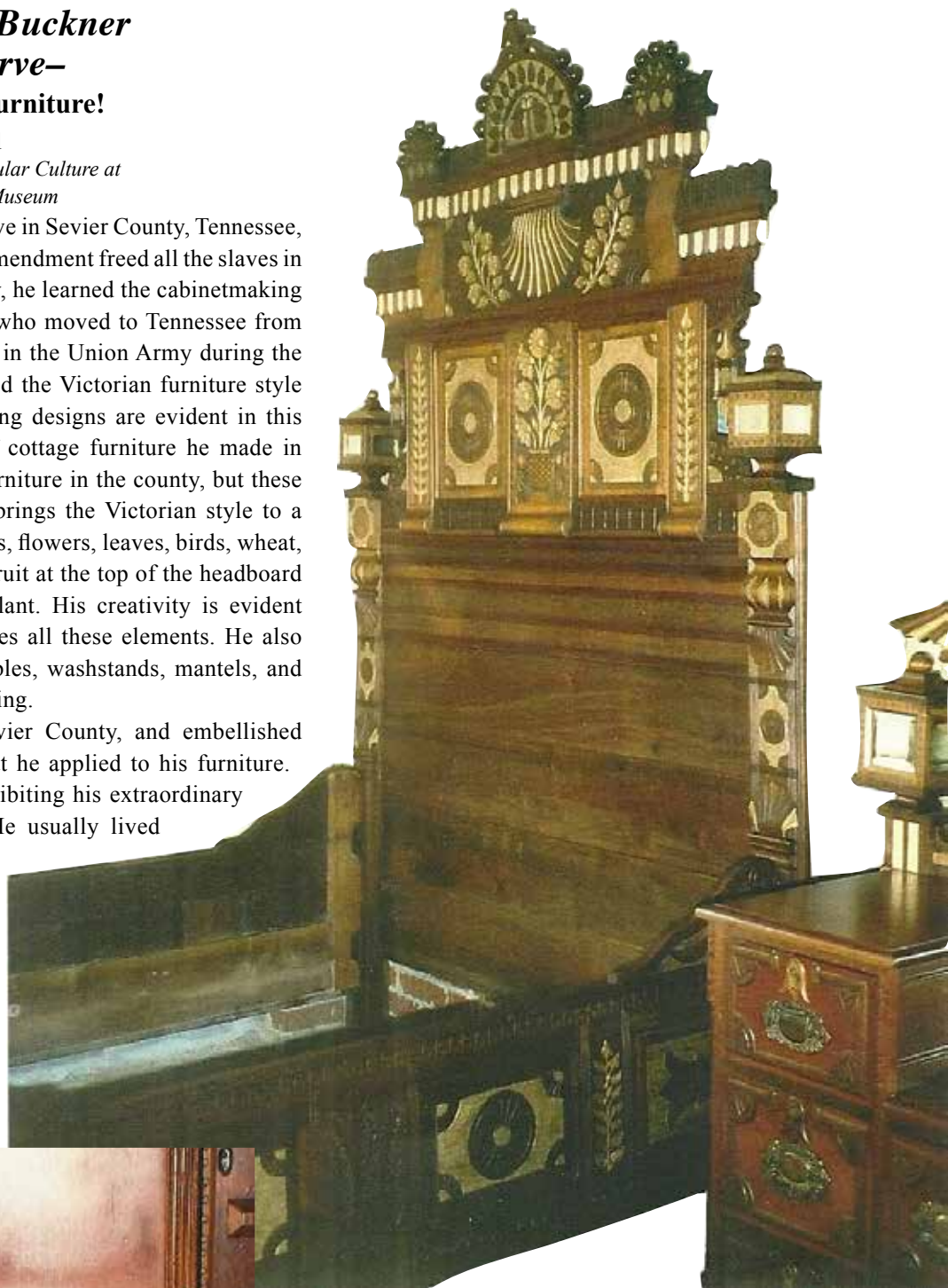
By Mike Bell

*Curator of Furniture & Popular Culture at
the Tennessee State Museum*

Born in 1856, Lewis Buckner was a slave in Sevier County, Tennessee, until the age of nine, when the Thirteenth Amendment freed all the slaves in the United States. According to oral history, he learned the cabinetmaking trade from Christian Stump, a white man who moved to Tennessee from Michigan, and from Sevier County served in the Union Army during the Civil War. Lewis Buckner probably learned the Victorian furniture style from Stump, but Buckner's original carving designs are evident in this walnut bed and dresser, two examples of cottage furniture he made in 1889. He made several sets of bedroom furniture in the county, but these pieces are probably the most ornate. He brings the Victorian style to a higher level with fanciful carvings of acorns, flowers, leaves, birds, wheat, fans, and various geometric designs. The fruit at the top of the headboard has been identified as wild African eggplant. His creativity is evident in the varied manner in which he combines all these elements. He also created original designs on wardrobes, tables, washstands, mantels, and on exterior and interior architectural detailing.

Buckner built houses throughout Sevier County, and embellished them with some of the same elements that he applied to his furniture. At least fifteen examples of dwellings exhibiting his extraordinary craftsmanship still exist in the county. He usually lived at the building site of a house during construction, and built his own home in 1894. Several of Buckner's flamboyantly-styled houses are listed in the National Registry of Historic Places due to their significant and unique architecture.

Lewis Buckner died in 1924, leaving us a legacy of some of the best folk carving in Tennessee. —Mike ♦



*Lewis Buckner Bed and Dresser, and Dresser detail
Photos courtesy the Family of Lewis Buckner*



Support the Arts!

Support the Tennessee Arts with this special license plate. The plate is only \$25 more than a regular plate and the proceeds go to all the programs and services of the Tennessee Arts Commission.



The Cumberland Furniture Guild has received generous support from the TAC, so let's support what they do! Go to <http://www.tennessee.gov/revenue/vehicle/licenseplates/misc/mostpop.htm> for more information on how to get yours.

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Workshops are Coming!

As most of you know, Guild member Bob Peters has been working with the Guild Board to launch a program of workshops for the Guild. We are pleased to announce the first of these workshops will be coming up in April. Look for emails or keep an eye on the Guild website for announcements about this exciting initiative very soon. If you are interested in presenting a workshop through the Guild, Please email Bob at workshops@cumberlandfurnitureguild.org. ♦



Photo by Dale McCloud

New Web Site is now Live

We are really excited that the Cumberland Furniture Guild's new web site has now launched. Among other new features the web site will maintain the Member Directory and membership renewal notices. We will be sending out instructions next week so that those of you who are now due to renew your memberships will be able to do so online. By creating a "user" for yourself on the website you will be able to update your directory listing, as well as take advantage of other capabilities which will come on line soon. If you're reading this in digital form, click on the image at left to explore the new web site! ♦

CUMBERLAND FURNITURE GUILD

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GALLERIES:

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Sunday, February 24, 2013

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[read more](#)

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