



P.O. Box 68343  
Nashville, Tennessee 37206

## SUMMER 2008 NEWSLETTER

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

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## *The Cumberland Furniture Guild's Summer Meeting*

**will be on Saturday, August 30th, 2008 from 2 p.m. until 4 p.m. at the Tennessee State Museum** in Nashville, Tennessee. This meeting will include a discussion and critique of various pieces in the exhibition (with permission from their makers) led by Alf Sharp. The Museum will then be open until 5 p. m., so people can hang around and take in the exhibition if they choose. *If you haven't yet been down to see our efforts, this is your last chance, since the exhibition closes on the 31st.* Because the Museum is open there will be no refreshments.

### *Directions to the meeting*

The Tennessee State Museum is at 505 Deaderick Street in Nashville. The Museum shares its entrance with TPAC between 5th and 6th on Deaderick. The numbers at the museum are: 615-741-2692 or 800-407-4324.

**From I-40:** Exit on Broadway (Exit #209A from I-40W turn Right, Exit #209B from I-40E, turn Left), going toward downtown. Turn left on Fifth Avenue and go three blocks. The museum is on the left between Union and Deaderick.

**From I-65 North:** I-65 merges with I-40. Follow I-40E directions.

**From I-65 South:** As you come into Nashville, I-65 merges with I-40, take I-40 East and follow I-40 directions.

**From I-24 East or West:** Exit on James Robertson Parkway (Exit #48), going toward downtown. Cross the river, turn left on Third Ave. and then right on Deaderick. Go two blocks; the museum is on your left, just past Fifth Ave.

**From I-24 East:** Exit on James Robertson Parkway (Exit #48), going toward downtown. Cross the river, turn left on Third Avenue and then right on Deaderick. Go two blocks; the museum is on your left, just past Fifth Ave.

## Letter From The President

By Alf Sharp

*Editor's Note: Since Alf's opening essay for the exhibition catalogue was edited significantly to fit the available space, we thought you'd enjoy reading the whole thing, uncut.*

Thirty-seven years ago, when I stumbled sideways into the beginnings of my woodworking career, I knew nothing of the history of the decorative arts, or of the progression of periods and styles through the centuries. I just knew I wanted to be able to make all this cool stuff I'd taken completely for granted up until then.

With time I grew to appreciate that one of the most fertile and influential periods of furniture design and manufacture was the 18th century, whether in America, England, Europe, or even China and Japan.

Whatever set of conditions conspired to cause the most talented artistic minds of the period to gravitate to the decorative arts rather than the "fine arts" is still unclear to me, but most interested people agree that the furniture that comes down to us from that era represents a real pinnacle of excellence.

I was not the only one to have discovered his passion in the art of furniture making. During the great cultural shift of the 60's and 70's, young people all over the country were flocking to this absorbing activity. Despite my immersion in the study of 18th century styles, the new original designs that were emerging, now often referred to as the post-modern, held great fascination as well. At first spawned as a reaction against the regimented, impersonal austerity of the international style, the freedom and opportunities for direct, satisfying handwork appealed to the burgeoning counter-culture movement.

Since few of the new inductees to this craft had been brought up in the traditional apprenticeship regimens, new ideas abounded. There were no sacred cows.

Nevertheless, as these new makers' work evolved and matured, practitioners of this craft did begin seeking more formal education in the principles of design and workmanship. Societies and dedicated publications began to arise. It amounted to a renaissance of the nearly forgotten skills and knowledge that had produced such astounding results 200 years previously.

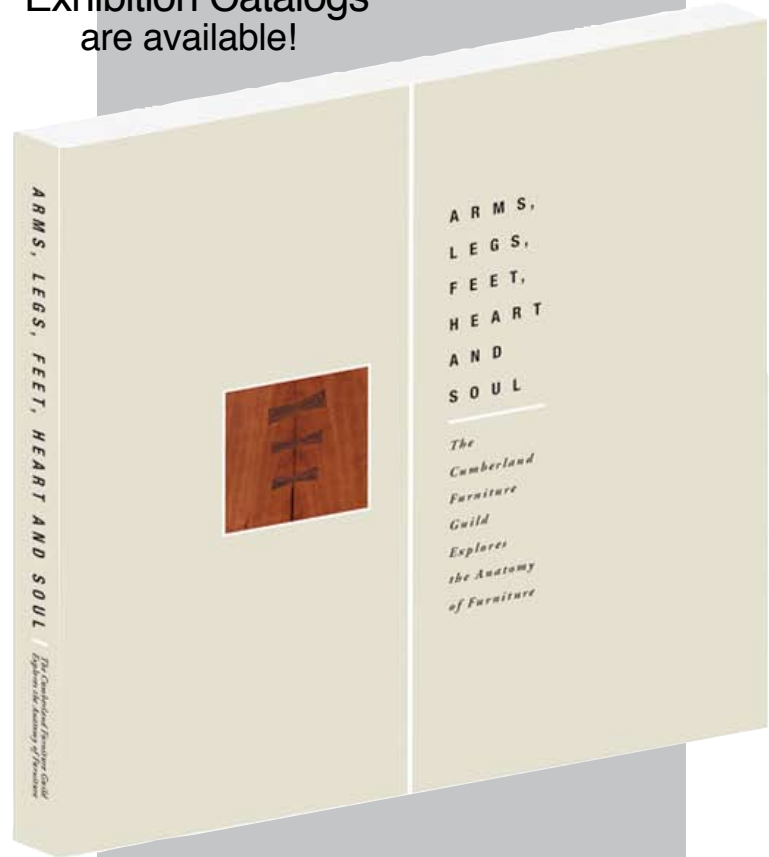
And yet, most of the new craftsmen still did not want to slavishly recreate past forms and conventions, and they sought to reposition furniture making in the art/cultural spectrum. Hence the rise of the studio-furniture movement described by Ned Cooke in his essay that accompanies this article in the exhibition catalogue.

In the last couple of decades, I have come to the conclusion that the body of work from the last 60 years has risen to the level of brilliance and importance that many ascribe to the 18th century. I'm convinced that a number of today's furniture makers will, with time, rise in general esteem to the level of a Thomas Chippendale or a Duncan Phyfe.

Perhaps some of those makers will even come from

Tennessee, for as you will see in perusing this catalogue, work capable of standing alongside the best being done anywhere is being done in the American mid-south. **-Alf**

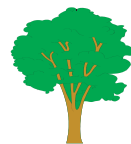
## Exhibition Catalogs are available!



A high quality catalog of the Cumberland Furniture Guild's current touring exhibition "*Arms, Legs, Feet, Heart and Soul—The Cumberland Furniture Guild Explores the Anatomy of Furniture*" with beautiful color plates of each piece in the show, is available for purchase. All proceeds support the Cumberland Furniture Guild.

To purchase a copy, please send a check or money order for \$30 plus \$5 shipping and handling per copy, to:  
The Cumberland Furniture Guild  
P.O. Box 68343  
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Or go to our web site at [www.cumberlandfurnitureguild.org](http://www.cumberlandfurnitureguild.org) for a link that will allow you to purchase them online with a credit card.



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## Guild Photo Shoots

The photo shoots we set up with photographer John Lucas for the guild membership were a great success. We had just as many people as we could handle and got some great shots, which became fodder for a great catalogue. A number of people took advantage of the event to get some great images of other pieces while they were at it.

Here (at right) John is shooting a chair made by guild member Greg Pennington of Hendersonville. ♦

## Swap & Shop

**For Sale: 10" Powermatic Contractors Saw** with mobile base. Never moved from shop. \$500 Carole Johanson. Home: 615-563-6385 Cell: 615-397-3382.

**Total Shop Liquidation Sale** 1015 W. Kirkland Ave. #113 September 6th and 7th. Call Aaron 615-545-5660.

**For Sale: Powermatic Model 50 6" Jointer**, this is the heavy type made in McMinnville— \$250. **Jet, EHVS-80 Edge Sander**, 1 ½ hp, 6"x 89" belt, 3 years old, used little. \$425 Contact jim.tenpenny@vanderbilt.edu or at (615) 405-8096.

**Anyone interested** in sharing a booth at ICFF (the International Contemporary Furniture Fair) in NY next May? It might be possible to write a grant submission to cover some of the costs. Call Tom Fuhrman [fuhrman@heartoftn.net](mailto:fuhrman@heartoftn.net) or 615-563-5898. ♦

## We're In at the AMUM!

As we hoped as of our last membership meeting, the Art Museum at The University of Memphis has agreed to host our exhibition in between Nashville and Knoxville. Dates are yet to be finalized, but we will let everyone know when they are. ♦

## Thanks to Everyone at the TSM

Everyone involved with the Cumberland Furniture Guild expresses a rousing round of applause and a deep note of gratitude to all the great folks at the Tennessee State Museum. Not only did they put together a really polished and well presented exhibition under pressure and at the last minute, they did it with grace and good humor throughout the process. ♦

## Member News

**Guild member Aaron Schroer** is liquidating his shop, as you might guess from the Swap and Shop item above. He wanted us to pass on the following: "I expect I will get back into woodworking on a different level after a nice break. Thanks everyone for your support and encouragement over the years."

**Kim Winkle** had one of her pieces featured in the gallery section of the current (Oct. 2008) issue of Fine Woodworking.

**Tom Fuhrman** is Featured artist of the month for August at Ruthie Cherry Fine Art Gallery, at the Loveless Cafe Shops.

Fine Woodworking has an hour or so worth of video available free of **Matthew Teague** building and talking about chairs at <http://www.taunton.com/finewoodworking/chair-workshop/index.asp> ♦



Photo by Worth Squire

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## Cool Tool Review

By Scott Thompson

Does a “dust-free” shop sound too good to be true? It probably is just a dream for most serious furniture makers. But what about “dust-free sanding?” I thought that this idea was also unattainable until using a vac system this past week that effectively collected the dust of a random orbit sander and a belt sander. Rather than critique one particular brand of “dust extractor”—what these new dedicated vacuums are called—I want to look at the general idea of dust-free sanding.

If you own a sander with a port on it to extract dust, I would like to encourage you to hook it up to a vacuum system somehow. Filters and bags connected directly to a sander are a definite improvement from the days of sanding in a cloud the same color as the wood on which you were working. But sanding with a good vacuum attached to the sander is unbelievably better yet. I believe that Festool, Fein, Delta and others make vacuums specifically designed to work with different sanders.

Some of them even allow you to plug the sander into the vacuum, so when you turn on the sander, the vacuum automatically starts as well. If you own a shop-vac, then consider getting an adapter to allow the hose to fit onto your sander. It may not have all of the bells and whistles, but it could dramatically alter the sanding experience.

The only negatives to connecting a dust-extractor to your sander that I could see are the initial cost, and sanding with a hose connected to the sander. Particularly if the sander requires two hands, it can be a challenge to keep the hose connected to the sander all of the time. To address this shortfall, some sanders have recently been designed to operate hooked up to a dust extractor—a

fact which the companies that manufacture them argue makes the sander / vacuum combination even more useful and effective.

There is also another way to avoid fighting dust—change what you make and how it is made. In July, my two oldest sons and I spent a week in East Tennessee working with gifted Windsor chair maker Curtis Buchanan. By working with green wood and by choosing to master the use of traditional hand tools used in making chairs, he has been able to work with wood and have almost no dust in his shop. The “green” (meaning wet and recently harvested) wood in the chair parts is shaped primarily with a drawknife—producing piles of large shavings, but almost no dust. Even when some of the parts are turned on the lathe, there is a large quantity of long, thin shavings with very little dust created. As the chairmaker himself put it: “. . . finish-cuts with sharp tools on the lathe do not require sanding!”

Obviously, the goal of making furniture out of wood is not just to create the least amount of dust. The goal should be to make beautiful, well-crafted, creative pieces of furniture. However, the process is even more enjoyable when you can walk outside and look up in the sky to see the clouds—without having to walk back into the shop and breathe clouds of another kind. **-Scott**



*Windsor chair maker Curtis Buchanan demonstrates the world's oldest dust mitigation system at our summer, 2006 meeting.*

*Photo by Scott Thompson*

## Letter from the Meeks

To close this issue, we thought everyone would enjoy reading this letter from some good friends of the Cumberland Furniture Guild:

*Dear Members,*

*It was our pleasure to attend The Third Biennial Exhibition Arms, Legs, Feet, Heart and Soul at the Tennessee State Museum. The quality of workmanship, and the variety of pieces were so overwhelming. The judges must be complimented on setting up this fantastic juried exhibition, which we hope can travel to more places than just to the Knoxville Museum off Art so it can be viewed, appreciated, and enjoyed by many. Our hats off, and great applause go to the Cumberland Furniture Guild which made this event possible.*

*Sincerely,*

*Sam and Arlene Meek, Nashville*

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Thanks to all of the people who volunteer their time, without whom there would be no Guild and no newsletter.

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