

# ShopTalk

Greenville Woodworkers Guild



November 2016



The November meeting will feature Alf Sharp. Alf is a master of high and low relief carving, inlay, marquetry, and French polishing. He has over thirty years in the studio furniture field, and has completed commissions for a number of historical homes and museums, as well as many private and corporate clients. Alf is the recipient of the 2008 *Cartouche Award* from *The Society of American Period Furniture Makers*. And he is past President of the Society.



## Alfred Sharp

Alfred Sharp was born and reared in Nashville, Tennessee, and attended Montgomery Bell Academy and Vanderbilt University. He had enrolled in Vanderbilt's Law School, but came to the realization that he was not interested in the practice of law. He worked for two and a half years in the Vanderbilt development office, slowly coming to recognize that none of the white-collar professions were appealing.

Casting about aimlessly for a couple of years, he offered to do some simple remodeling for his landlord in lieu of rent. Though having no experience in carpentry, he was able to please this first customer, and more work ensued. One job led to another, and Alf found himself gravitating toward interior trim and simple cabinetry. An aborted geodesic dome project left him with a couple of pieces of specialized machinery, and some time to experiment.

It was clear that this was an activity that both spoke to his heart and called up a strong ability that seemed to reside within. He loved making things with his hands and out of wood! Asking himself, "What would be the ultimate expression of this activity?", he saw that it was fine furniture. People don't just walk in and offer to pay you big bucks, however, because you say you want to create fine furniture! Thus began years of taking on all sorts of projects, from a playground slide through kitchen cabinets to the occasional prized furniture commission.

At the beginning of this odyssey, there were very few old men remaining who could pass on the knowledge and techniques of fine hand wood-working. Since it was almost a lost art, Alf read books and experimented. As this process of study continued, it became apparent to him that perhaps the finest furniture ever built, both in terms of artistic style and technical skill, was created in the 18th century. And these remarkable tours de force had been made entirely with hand tools, power equipment



of any sort not yet having been invented! This was the well-spring to plumb, and Alf began visiting the prominent museums and collections, and picking the brains of collectors, dealers, and scholars in antique furniture.

Ironically during all this time, in an effort to actually make a living for his family, Alf had been growing his business in an entirely opposite direction. By 1980, he had a 13,500 sq. ft. shop, a quarter-million dollars worth of machinery, and twenty-five production employees, cranking out fairly low-end furniture. Sitting behind a desk and talking on the phone most of the time, he was hardly ever even touching a piece of wood. Was this not what he had tried to escape a dozen years earlier? He was miserable, and to make matters worse, a few truly significant fine furniture commissions were being offered to him, if he could somehow find the time. It's not hard to guess the outcome. The factory was sold at the first opportunity, and Alf built a small woodworking shop next to his home, constructed around the premise of using primarily original-period hand tools, large enough only to allow a maximum of two assistants.

Since then he has concentrated on museum-quality, one-of-a-kind furniture, primarily in the 18th century American style. Also, he works in 19th and 20th century historical styles, as well as designing and building a number of pieces which merge traditional values and proportions with contemporary idioms and exotic woods.

His work has been featured in Colonial Homes magazine, Southern Living magazine, the book *Architecture of the Old South*, *Fine Woodworking* magazine, *Woodwork* magazine, the book *The Tennessee Sampler*, *Historic Preservation* magazine, *Furniture Studio 3* and other publications. In addition, he has taught a number of courses and seminars in his field, and demonstrated at various historical festivals.







FOR ALF'S GALLERY OF WORK GO TO:

<http://www.alfredsharp.com/bio.php>

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**David Aman**  
President



## THE PRESIDENTS CORNER

My sincere thanks to all of my fellow guild members for all of your support during the past weeks while I was sick, hospitalized and beginning my recuperation. Your cards, visits, prayers and well wishes have provided comfort and encouragement.

The Board of Directors, Operations Team, Mentors and Shop Supervisors have all stepped up and made sure that none of the day to day issues were ignored. Everything has been handled promptly and efficiently and the Guild continues to operate smoothly, just as it should. Again, this just proves that the Guild is larger than any of us and will sustain itself and grow for many year to come.

I look forward to being back with everyone in a few weeks, especially for the Christmas Dinner. This event marks the end of our first thirty-five years as a Guild, and I hope you will plan to join us for this very special occasion. Best wishes.

## Tool Sale / Auction

We have some important news regarding our upcoming sale on November 5.

The length of the sale has been shortened and the times changed. The doors to the sale will open at 8:30 am, the silent auction will end at 10:30, and the sale will end at 11:00.

The board room door (left of the auditorium door) will be used for entry to the sale, and members can congregate there until the doors open, at 8:30 am sharp! Coffee and donuts will be available.

Entrance to the auditorium will be through the hallway door. The sales folks and the cashiers will be set up by the counter and you can exit through the auditorium door to your vehicle. People will be available to assist with your goods. Baskets will be available to carry small items and they may be purchased for \$15.00.

If you bring your member number there is no need to preregister. You will be asked for your number at the sales desk. If you do not know your number, or if you are not a Guild member you will have to register at a desk in the Board room.

The tools on sale are mostly of good quality, reasonably priced and will enhance member's workshops. There are some special items: an industrial grade, five machines in one, table saw, and a Delta shaper with a mechanical feeder. These will not be on display but a full description will be available. Also we have several collector item Bridge City hand planes and accessories, only one of which will be on display. A single plane is now selling on Ebay for a premium over the list price of \$1100.00, but ours will be a discounted price. And, we do not have much on the dollar tables. We did not clean out any member shops this year.

Come and obtain some great bargains, help the Guild's fundraising efforts, enjoy the fellowship, and remember to thank the Auction team who have worked so hard to bring this sale to you.

The Alf Sharp Seminar will be a thorough education about the finishing of fine furniture. He will include French Polishing, Fine Finishes and Patina.

## DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION NOVEMBER 3

### COOKOUT

A cookout will be hosted by Bobby Hartness at his shop on Sunday night, November 6 at 5 pm.

This will be an opportunity to socialize with Alf and discuss your projects and interest. Bring your spouse and enjoy.

### SEMINAR

Seminar: Monday, November 7  
9 am - 4 pm

Cost: \$60

Includes Seminar, Lunch and Cookout on Sunday, November 6 at 5 pm

Register online:

[http://gwg.wildapricot.org/  
event-2352381](http://gwg.wildapricot.org/event-2352381)

or

Register by phone

David Dewease 864-293-2573  
between 9:00 am and 9:00 pm.



## Birdhouse Competition

Rosie Gaddy, chairman of our annual birdhouse completion, has announced that the 2017 competition will be held at the February 6 membership meeting. There will be separate divisions for adult and youth (under 18). There will be three categories in each division, "Functional"; "Decorative"; and "Whimsical/Green". Each person may enter one birdhouse in each category for great prizes!. For details and rules concerning the competition or entries, please see the fliers that are posted around the shop. So get busy now, and get those birdhouses made!! We hope to have several to place around our grounds for our feathered friends to use!

## Calendar of Events - 2016

### August 1 thru mid 2017

McKissick Museum Exhibit of Furniture Makers

### November 5

Tool Sale/Silent Auction

### November 7

Alf Sharp Finishing Seminar

### November 7

November Membership Meeting

### November 8

GWG Operations Meeting

### November 8

GWG Board of Directors Meeting

### November 12

Fall Festival at Roper Mountain

### November 12

Shop & Grounds Clean-Up /  
Fix-up Day

### December 5

December Meeting &  
Christmas Dinner



## Christmas Dinner with the Spouses

Please mark Monday night, December 5 on your calendar for a “dinner date” with your significant other. This will be our annual Christmas Dinner at the Guild, starting at 5:30 pm with dinner at 6:00. Mutt’s of Greer is preparing a wonderful dinner of turkey & dressing, baked ham, macaroni & cheese, sweet potatoes, green beans, drinks and dessert. All of

this for just \$16 per person. We will have sign-up beginning at the November membership meeting, and afterwards through our membership e-mail program.

Come early and see “show & tell” from various members, then stay for an entertaining program. This year we are pleased to have as our guests The Greenville Chamber Singers. They were formed in 1996 and are under the direction of Angela Lemere, district choral coordinator at Dorman

High School. They will be presenting a concert featuring familiar favorites (with some fun twists!) as well as some new music.

Again this year members are asked to bring a handmade item to be given as door prizes. So get busy now so you can showcase your original and creative genius. Our goal is to have one gift for each spouse and guest in attendance.

This will be our best Christmas Dinner yet. You don’t want to miss it!



## CHARITABLE PROJECTS / September 13 to October 3

	Hours
Mauldin Police Cabinet.....	19
Santa's Workshop (Toys) .....	149
Our Lady of the Rosary (Shelves and Pedestals) ( <i>Time donated by volunteers - non-Guild approved</i> ) .....	29
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>197</b>

## MENTORING CLASSES / September 13 to October 3

	Hours
Combined total hours for adult classes.....	340
Youth Classes .....	174
<b>Total</b> .....	<b>514</b>

For Charity, the guys working in the Toys Workshop had nice numbers as usual!

The Mentoring numbers picked up nicely with nice numbers in several skills!

Youth mentors gave 174 hours of their time overseeing 32 sessions!

Our teen woodworkers logged 50 sessions over 219 hours. Beginners and Charter School guys combined for 30 or so hours and 12 sessions !

All of these hours and sessions were spread out over 216 separate individuals  
or about 30% of our membership!

That's a really good participation rate I'd say!

– Jack McKay



Show and Tell



Ukulele  
by Bill Fuller



Navy Tomcat Insignia  
by Dave Fisher



Birmingham clock  
by Michelle Grandonico



Jasper Stone Inset  
by Virginia Meador



Ornaments  
by Dave Paul





**NEXT GUILD MEETING - MONDAY, November 7, 2016 - 6:30 p.m.**

New member orientation begins at 6:00 p.m. in the Board Room. / Social time begins at 6:15 p.m.

Greenville Woodworkers Guild  
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For more information  
[www.greenvillewoodworkers.com](http://www.greenvillewoodworkers.com)



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