

# WOOD CHIPS



Northwest Indiana Woodworkers Association  
Volume 16, Issue 8 August 2012

## President's Corner

Hi Woodworkers, I want to send out a special THANK YOU to all the members and their families for working so hard to make the Lake County Fair Booth a GREAT SUCCESS. I was fortunate to be able to attend for more than a few hours this year. We had so much fun, many ideas and knowledge was exchanged. The fair food was a hit and the public enjoyed the presentations. If you didn't sign the attendance sheet please see John Hunter, this is linked to our popular Achievement Program.

I attended the Bremen Indiana Summer Carving Camp. This was a 4 day carving roundup. There were many nationally known carving instructors teaching so many different carving skills. I carved with Bruce Henn CCA member, Bruce Nicholas chip carving, Bob Lawrence lures & tramp art, Sharon Bechtold pyrography. Wow! Phil Malavolta, Mic King, and Bob Rinearson also attended. I camped with Kathleen Hays, president of Duneland Carvers. Kathleen is a wonderful carver and has been my mentor. Life is good!

This Sunday Aug 26 is our annual picnic at Hidden Lake Park; mark this down on your calendar. Don't forget a wrapped gag gift for the famous bingo game. Bring a dish to pass. Make sure it's in plastic. Hidden Lake bans glass containers at the park. When you drive in let them know your name. If you signed up ahead of time the club picks up the park entrance fee. Hope you signed up! See you at the picnic!

**Sig Turning** held air brush painting and pyrography program at Dave Skaggs Studio in Crown Point IN. I was able to attend this and it was amazing. Denny McCoole is the coordinator for the Turning Sig if you want to join in the lathe fun!

**Sig Carving** will meet at 6pm before the membership meeting. If you have any items you are working on bring them and share your knowledge. If you have any questions call or email Marcia Lichnerowicz.

**Lake Station Library Display** will be set up for September 2012, the exact date has not been determined. Part of who we are as NIWA is to reach out to the public. This library display is an important tool for this. Please bring items to display to the August membership meeting. Bring it in a box. Make sure the item and box has your name on it. Also please list the box put the type of wood and finish used. I have found people are very interested in this information. We have a good size locked display cabinet. However, we cannot display cradles or furniture. The height size maximum is about 2 feet also width about 18 inches. The library address is 2007 Central Avenue, Lake Station, IN Phone: 1-219-962-2409. If you have any question call Marcia not the library ☺

**Toys for Kids** deadline is coming soon. We have not yet met our goal of 1000. The kids need our help in order to have a Merry Christmas.

**Christmas Tree @ Welcome Center** The tree topper contest is coming up at September's meeting. Hope to see many beautiful tree toppers. We have drawing for the toppers submitted. Nancy Distel has been busy so I want to remind you that we still need ornaments also. We want our tree to be #1 this year!

Marcia Lichnerowicz  
President NIWA

## SHOW AND TELL



Ken Garbe



Ken Woolard



Jon Robbins



Lalo Gonzalez



Lalo Gonzalez



Kevin Sturgeon





John Hunter



Bob Rinearson



Emery Brazil



Mick King

## LAKE COUNTY FAIR





## **BREMEN INDIANA SUMMER CARVING CAMP**



### **ITEMS FOR SALE**

If you have any wood working related items that you wish to sell through the newsletter please contact Lalo Gonzalez [LaLogon@sbcglobal.net](mailto:LaLogon@sbcglobal.net) or John Hunter [john.b.hunter@frontier.com](mailto:john.b.hunter@frontier.com) Include a description and the price you are selling them for, also how you may be contacted.

If you are looking for a tool that another member would like to sell you can place a wanted ad in the newsletter, just contact John Hunter at [john.b.hunter@frontier.com](mailto:john.b.hunter@frontier.com)

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

2012

August 23<sup>rd</sup> Membership Meeting at Hidden Lake 7:00 PM Donnie Smith a Master Gardener of the Lake County Master Gardeners Association will speak

August 26<sup>th</sup> Club Picnic at Hidden Lake Park 12 Noon

September 18<sup>th</sup> Committees Meeting at Marcie's home 7:00 PM

September 27<sup>th</sup> Membership Meeting at Hidden Lake 7:00 PM Frank Schmidt  
Woodworking for the blind

October 1<sup>st</sup> Executive Board Meeting at Portage Library 7 PM

October 16<sup>th</sup> Committees Meeting at Marcie's home 7:00 PM

October 25<sup>th</sup> Membership Meeting at Hidden Lake 7:00 PM Chuck Norrman bird Feeders

November 20<sup>th</sup> Committees Meeting at Hidden Marcie's home 7:00 PM

November 15<sup>th</sup> Membership Meeting at Hidden Lake 7:00 PM Toy Program

December 18<sup>th</sup> Committees Meeting at Marcie's home 7:00 PM

December 20<sup>th</sup> Membership Meeting at Hidden Lake 7:00 PM Christmas Party,  
Installation and Awards

### Bob Flexner's Finishing Tips

<http://www.thefinishingstore.com/>

#### The Role of Flattening Agent in Creating Sheen

The sheen of a finish is the degree of light reflection when a surface is viewed at a low angle. In a high sheen or high gloss surface, you see glare or a distinct reflected image. In a low sheen, satin or flat surface, glare and reflection are softened to the point of non-existence.



Flatted finishes (left) produce little or no reflection while gloss finishes with no flattening agent added (right) reflect glare and image

Oil finishes always produce a softened satin sheen. Wax finishes produce a little more shine than oil. All film-building finishes—varnish, lacquer, water-based finish and shellac—can be made to have any sheen, from high gloss to very flat.

There are two ways to produce a flatted sheen: rub the finish with abrasives of various grits to produce the sheen you want, or use a finish with the sheen already built in by the inclusion of a “flattening agent.” Varnish (including polyurethane varnish), lacquer and water-based finish are available in several sheens. Shellac is supplied only in gloss.

Both methods of creating a flatted sheen—rubbing with abrasives and using a product containing flattening agent—work by creating a microscopically rough surface that reflects light randomly.

This article is about the role of flattening agent and how it works.

## **Flattening agent**

Flattening agent is the solid stuff that settles to the bottom of a can of clear finish and has to be stirred into suspension before use. If a finish doesn't contain a flattening agent, the finish will be glossy when it dries.

The flattening agent is composed of small particles of solid material, usually amorphous silica, the nature of which makes the particles invisible and transparent in the cured finish film. As the wet finish shrinks during drying, it pulls taut over the particles near the surface, and this creates the micro-roughness that gives the flatted effect.

The particles aren't exposed; they are shrink wrapped by the finish film. You see the shrink wrapping occurring as you watch the flatted finish dry. At first, when you apply the finish, the film is glossy. But as the solvent or thinner reaches a certain point of evaporation, the flattening appears rather suddenly.

In most cases you buy the finish with the flattening agent already added. But flattening agent, usually called “flattening paste,” is available separately from suppliers to the professional finishing trade for you to add yourself.

Most manufacturers of flatted finishes use loosely defined terms, such as semi-gloss, satin, eggshell, flat and matte, to describe what they are selling you. Some manufacturers who sell to professional finishers use a numbering system that runs from 90 (high gloss) down to 10 (very flat). This is the more accurate and helpful system and should be used by everyone.



Few manufacturers targeting non-professionals offer more than two or three choices of sheen. Most sell only gloss and satin. Even with just these two varieties, however, you still have total control over the sheen you will get simply by pouring off some of the gloss from a can of satin in which the flattening agent has settled and mixing the two parts.

Add more of the poured-off gloss to get an in-between sheen. Add more of the remaining flatted part to get a flatter sheen than you began with.

Be sure to keep the store clerk from shaking the can, or let the can sit undisturbed on your shelf for several weeks before pouring off some of the gloss.

Because the flatted effect is created by a roughened surface, it should be obvious that a flatted sheen can be made glossy in the same way that a rubbed satin or flat sheen can. Simply level the surface with fine sandpaper, then polish with very fine abrasives.

Likewise, a gloss sheen can be made satin or flat by rubbing with abrasives that produce the sheen you want.

In other words, you have total control over the sheen you end up with.

## **Myths**

There are two common myths about flattening agent that are often repeated among professional finishers and store clerks.

The first is that the flattening effect is cumulative either because each coat adds to the flatness of the previous coat, or, in the case of lacquer, because all the flattening agent from each coat floats to the top of the last coat applied.

The second is that flattening agent weakens the scratch resistance of the finish film.

## **Cumulative Effect**

Because the flatted effect is created not by the particles embedded deep within each coat of finish film, but only by those particles located near the surface, there is no cumulative effect caused by applying more coats. The only way to increase the flatness of a finish is to add more flattening agent to it. You can continue to apply coat after coat of any given flatness and the resulting sheen will not change. It's the last coat applied that establishes the sheen.



It's the last coat of finish applied that determines the sheen. This is true with all finishes. The left quarter of this panel has three coats of gloss polyurethane varnish applied. The second quarter has three coats of gloss followed by one coat of satin. The third quarter has three coats of satin polyurethane varnish followed by one coat of gloss. The right quarter has three coats of satin. There's no difference in the gloss of the first and third quarters even though the third quarter has three coats of satin underneath. And there's no difference in the satin of the second and fourth quarters even though the second has three coats of gloss underneath.

You can easily confirm this by applying a gloss coat over a satin or flat coat. When the finish has dried, the surface will be glossy just as if all the coats had been gloss.

Nor does flattening agent rise to the top of a coat of finish. If anything the flattening agent settles, just as it does in a can. At any rate, flattening agent surely doesn't transfer from one coat to another.

This myth may have gotten started because finishers have noticed that a flatted finish can become glossy after years of use. What has really happened, of course, is that the micro-roughness on the surface has been leveled and polished by wear, and the remaining flattening agent in the film is transparent.

### **Scratch resistance**

Many flatted finishes appear to scratch more easily than gloss finishes (though a flatted finish doesn't show scratches as clearly as a gloss finish). But because the particles at the surface are all covered (shrink wrapped) with the finish, there can't be any difference in scratch resistance.

There can, however, be the appearance of less scratch resistance because it's easier for coarse objects to level the micro-bumps than to dig into a level film.

To aid in resisting micro-bump leveling, many manufacturers use wax-coated, amorphous silica, but there's no way for you to know in advance because this information is never provided.

The wax-coated particles serve an additional purpose of keeping the flattening agent from clumping at the bottom of the can and also from clumping around the lip of the can after you have poured some finish from it. Clumping, if it does occur, shows up as tiny white specks in the finish and is impossible to redissolve. You'll have to switch to a fresh can of finish, in which case I would suggest changing brands.