

Artisans Quarterly Review

H A N D C R A F T E D C U S T O M W O O D W O R K I N G

2010 Finishes / 2011 Begins

- Editor Speaking
- Highlights from Philly Furniture Show
- Our New JOC; Dana
- Cute Girl Whittling
- Woodworker Michael Pietras Returns!
- Charles Maxwell's Hardwood Clocks
- English Brown Oak Mantle Restoration
- An Acacia Wood Cane
- Featured in Sticks
- Breathing new Fire into Dragons
- Stanley's Warriors
- Lion's of Judah
- Gem Industries Orbital Polisher Demo
- A Brand New 2010 Camaro
- Woodworker Blows at Glass
- Plenty of Kittens & Pups!

EDITOR SPEAKING

Well so much for 2010! If you didn't notice we kinda missed our quarterly mark on the newsletters. Things got busy, life got away from us, and we simply decided to take a break from the publishing business.

So what are we shooting for in 2011? Well we all hoped that things would have returned to the glory days of economic boom with boundless spending being the norm; yeah that bubble has popped! Our focus remains at our roots, providing museum quality restoration services and investment grade custom furniture, woodcarving, and sculpture.

The theory is simple; restore don't replace, be cost conscious and environmentally proactive. Invest in tangibles; buy furniture once and have it last a lifetime. Heirloom quality furniture for your home or office provides beauty, functionality, and it often increases in value.

PHILLY 2010 HIGHLIGHTS



The 2010 Philadelphia Furniture Show proved to be an interesting experience. We put on a display showing our original gothic furniture, wildlife carvings, and our restoration skills. Special guest Charles Maxwell joined us at the event grabbing a great deal of spotlight and praise with some of the most unique hand made all wooden clocks on the market today.

The crowd was steady and we enjoyed the interaction with curious aficionados from around the tri-state entertaining questions and inquiries about our commissioned work and our conservation services.

OUR NEW JOC; DANA



Our new jewelry organization consultant (JOC), Dana Oxenberg, sunlights as a bio-engineer while applying her creative talents towards solving a prominent female dilemma. Anyone who owns more than one necklace has discovered that somehow when the two items are placed together in a dark drawer they intertwine into a metallic orgy that ends with an insurmountably complex knot. The intricacy of the entanglement exponentially increases with each additional chain eventually reaching the state of a yarnball attached by a dozen angry kittens.

How to a value on one of Dana's creations? - Well how many hours have you wasted untangling these disasters? How many times have you been late to an important engagement; perhaps a job interview, a date, a wedding? How much cursing was involved? Do you actually have a ball of cherished precious metal strings abandoned to the abyss of a shoebox so your conscious mind can be blinded from the frustration of failed detangling attempts.

These so called flat drawer "jewelry boxes" compartmentalized in no logical manner allow you to simply pile earrings into a lump. Do you find it strange that inanimate objects can manage to vote one or more mismatched rejects off the box? It doesn't make sense, it breaks the laws of physics, but when you are in a rush try to match a pair of earrings from this indiscriminate pile you damn well know it's impossible! The net (sad) result of all of this insanity is known as Jewelry Distress Syndrome (JDS) ...

What are Dana's qualifications to present herself as a JOC? Well, to start out she's a woman who owns and wears jewelry; second she is clinically diagnosed as being severely OCD. Even working in the pharma industry and having access to best meds available to subdue this obsessive nature, it remains alive and disturbingly focused on relieving the female species of the pain and suffering they endure in their daily dressing routines.

The earring screens swing out for display and simple access to studs for removal and mounting. The loops cling firmly around a vertical gallery, while the open hook variants are hung in a straightforward and orderly parade line. Notice the chains holding bracelets; unhook the clasp at one end and the string comes forward to present each individual chain for review.

Dana's solution will clearly allow all of you to overcome adversity! The only decision to make now is how many to order. Obviously you need one for yourself, but please help end women's suffering everywhere and get one for your daughter, mother, sister, aunts, cousins, friends, and coworkers.

<http://www.artisansofthevalley.com/docs/JewelryBoxesbyDana.pdf>



CUTE GIRL WHITTLING

It should be obvious by now that we draft anyone who hangs around our shop / family for any more than a few hours into some sort of project! This held true with our JOC Dana Oxenberg, who not only created her new line of Jewelry boxes, she received a few pointers from Stanley Saperstein on the art of whittling.

Dana's first carving, as with most of Stan's students, was a quickly configured simple variant of a classic "gnome." These little figures provide an excellent subject to illustrate the basic use of whittling knives and the techniques used to hold the piece and the blade. As with almost every new whittler, Dana experienced a few minor mishaps but quickly learned basic tool handling. Fortunately we keep a good supply of tape and bandages on hand for this very common occupational hazard. Dana's personal projects will be appearing on our blog soon!



WOODWORKER MICHAEL PIETRAS RETURNS

2011 Brings the return of one of Eric's long time friends and fellow artist Michael Pietras. Mike will be joining the Artisans gang bringing an array of skills in furniture making, carving, finishing, wood turning, boat making, and a host of other crafts and trades. Mike's portfolio extends into modern furniture including pieces combining the use of wood, concrete, Corian, and other materials. Say tuned for more details on Mike's portfolio!



CHARLES MAXWELL'S HARDWOOD CLOCKS



Clockmaker and woodworker Charles Maxwell "Max" joined us at the Philly show last year, featuring some of his exquisite all wood clocks. His creations are absolutely mesmerizing, the hypnotic passage of time experienced in an artistic form.

"When most people think of a hardwood clock they usually conjure an image of the family heirloom grandfather clock or the classic fireplace mantel clock. These clocks are common fixtures in many homes. Their abundance is a testament to our human curiosity and attraction to these magnificent and beautiful creations. Few people, however, can imagine a clock that is constructed entirely from wood, including the moving gear trains. Wooden skeleton clocks are rare works of functional art. Only a handful of woodcraft artisans can design and build them to order." www.hardwoodclocks.com

We hope to be seeing a lot more of Max's work, perhaps even adding one to our personal collection!

ENGLISH BROWN OAK
MANTLE RESTORATION

This classic English brown oak mantle certainly isn't our most complex restoration project, but it doesn't need to be in order to show off the amazing beauty of oak.

The piece arrived in the standard condition, joints loose, finish almost gone and blackened, sections cracked and missing. A few weeks in our shop and the structural integrity was regained along with the warmth and glow of an heirloom quality hand rubbed shellac finish.

We're always happy to work on these old oak pieces, the restorations speak for themselves time after time.

AN ACACIA WOOD CANE



Acacia wood is the world's most famous religious wood.. In the Old Testament Exodus 25-27 God orders Moses to build the Ark of the Covenant and the Tabernacle out of acacia wood.

Today it is one of the most difficult woods to obtain. It is highly protected in Israel's Sinai Desert. There are 1300 species of acacia trees in the world only four grow in the Sinai. The most famous is the Umbrella Acacia. This is an apple tree sized tree that has a root system that extends many yards beyond the tree's canopy. The acacia is crucial to the environment of the Sinai. It provides abundant seeds that feed a wild verity of birds and animals. The tree grows along dry washes waiting for the little rain in the desert to arrive. The root system is very delicate and if the even a small amount of weight is put on them they dye damaging the tree.

Special permits have to be issued to cut even a dead tree. The wood comes on the market once in a generation. It is a beautiful varied colored wood from a dark brown to many shades in between. The sap wood is white. It is of a little above medium density and carves well. The wood I obtained was from a tree that had to be removed because of a road alignment. It came in the form of 5 ½ inch long by three quarter square pen blanks.

My client Jerry Stoll of National Tax Advocates collects canes of a religious nature. I have made him five others. When I saw the wood come on the market at Griffin Exotic Woods I called him and said take a look at their site, not only is the wood beautiful if I made a cane out of it you may be the only person in the world to have a cane made out of the wood that Moss's walking staff was made of. He commissioned the staff right away even though the wood cost 350 dollars.

There is an interesting story that tells of how Moses got his staff. The story says Moses was visiting the village of his intended bride to collect her. There were several large boulders in the center of the village and in-between them was growing an acacia sapling. It was a perfect size for a staff. Everyone in the village had tried to pull it up and could not. They could not cut it because the boulders were in the way and the staff would be too short. Moses came along and said that is a great staff and walked over and with no effort pulled it out. Everyone was amazed. He walked with that staff the rest of his life. It is also thought that this story was the basis for the King Author story of pulling the sword from the stone.

The cane was glued together with construction adhesive in a brick pattern to make the blank. It took 28 pen blanks for the shaft and four for the handle. The cane was shaped to size the handle fitted and appliqué carvings as shown were applied and painted.

FEATURED IN STICKS



Stanley got another great feature profile this year in Woodworker's Journal!

"This is like my little retirement hobby," says Stan Saperstein of his carved walking sticks and canes. It's a hobby that, in part, grew out of another of his hobbies: historic reenactment. Stan is a reenactor (also known as a living historian) of the American Revolution and Civil War. This hobby involves staging battles from these conflicts, but it also entails spending time as a living historian of a soldier from the era in a mock military encampment.

[Stanley Saperstein: Walking Sticks with an Historic Bent Woodworkers Journal Online Issue: Issue 253](#)
[Posted Date: 7/13/2010 by Joanna Werch Takes](#)



BREATHING NEW FIRE INTO DRAGONS



This unique hand carved piece is a fine example of Asian artwork. Legends, mythology, religion, folk art, and tales throughout the history of many Asian cultures feature the likeness of this serpentine creature. Be it the defender of Buddhism, guardian of the East, or focal point of Zen the dragon bears many burdens and encapsulates a great value.

This carving arrived bare of the colorful red and gold that most often pronounce the vibrancy of this creature when in carved or painted form.

Our function was to repair the carvings as required, remove ancient dust and grime, then apply the new colors for future generations to enjoy!



STANLEY'S WARRIORS

We here at Artisans of the Valley always like to make sure Stanley is kept busy and out of trouble. A common method of ensuring he remains productive is to provide him with unique carving opportunities.

These two experimental Indian warriors are busts of days past. Adorned for battle they each feature an expressive face, bold coloration, detailed Mohawks, earrings, and necklaces..

Bust and caricature carvings are available by special commission., each an original signed work of art. Scale and subject is determined for each project, these two figures range from about 8" to 15".



THE LIONS OF JUDAH

The pictured Lions of Judah are a traditional Jewish Symbol found in most Synagogues usually atop a Torah cabinet. The lions were carved by Stanley Saperstein of Artisans of the Valley Fine Custom Wood Working this summer for a client in Canada for his personal home Torah cabinet .

The carving is 22 inches high by 41 inches long three inches thick done in poplar and painted gold over a coat of Gesso (the traditional European method of painting wooden carvings.) The crown has artificial rubies and diamonds in the crown along with stained glass. The lions eyes are artificial rubies.

We enjoy the artistic freedom that comes with commissions of this nature; a basic concept is presented and then the artist takes control.

A combination of power carving and traditional hand carving tools were used. As we've evolved in skills we've also added to our array of toys; employing angle carvers, Fordem Tools, Dremells, chainsaws, and we're planning to obtain ourselves a high speed turbine carver soon. We'll keep you posted as we figure out what it can do!



GEM INDUSTRIES ORBITAL SANDER DEMO

Artisans made a demo video! Gem manufacturers a high powered and extremely well made random orbital polisher that has been on the market for generations within the world of auto body.

Recently Gem took an obvious leap with a few minor changes to the machine and new discs to bring their polishers into the market for sanding solid surface and wood. Artisans keeps one of these machines on staff and we love it!

Richard Biederman, President of [Gem Industries](http://www.gemindustries.com) contacted us and asked if we could make a short video clip featuring their polisher at work on one of our commissions. Richard proposed to use the clip in an upcoming trade show and for ongoing marketing. The idea sounded like fun, so we enlisted Caitlyn Shier (proud owner of a new camcorder) to assist with filming for the project. The video was edited by photographer and videographer Richard Ondrovic.

The finished clip can be viewed through our website at:

http://www.artisansofthevalley.com/docs/gemindustries_sanderdemo_HQ.mp4

ONE BRAND NEW 2010 CAMARO

2010 proved to be an interesting year. Among the updates in our lives outside the shop is a new toy. Believe it or not there are times when we just don't feel like playing with our wood; sometimes raw horsepower is required! Back in his high school days Eric had a '69 Camaro that "when it ran" was pretty quick; '64 vette 327, Fuelie 202 heads, punched 30 over, holly manifold/cam, etc. We figured about 350HP through a 3sp Fairbanks tranny. Steering with the throttle and the brakes as much as with the wheel was a standard tactic with classic muscle cars.

Fast-forward to circa 2010 Eric's new 2SS/RS 6.2ltr (with a few minor tweaks), and a 6 speed automatic is pushing 500hp (357rwhp) and handling about 10x better than his old '69 with an array of multilink suspension components, traction control, brakeforce distribution, and stability management options manipulate this contraption into a world of handling capabilities unheard of in the 60's. Breaking in both a new car and new camera; well ... Eric a few unique photo opportunities last summer!



Special thanks to Gina, our car show model for the day ...

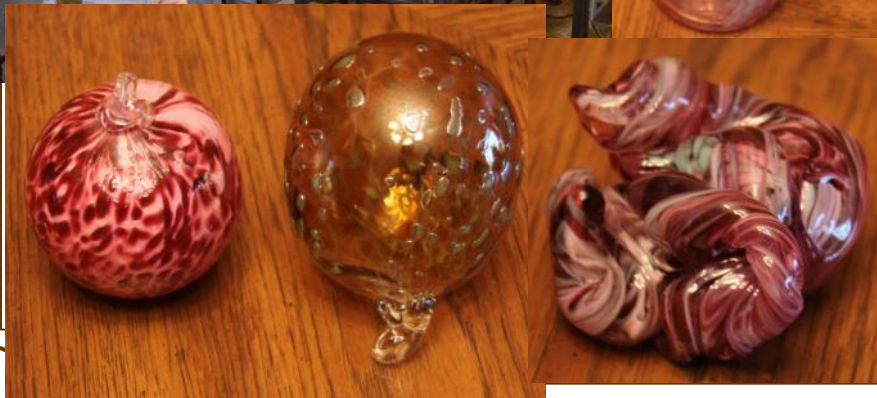
WOODWORKER BLOWS AT GLASS

So, we decided to take a class in glass blowing. An experience which quickly taught Eric that his skills as a woodworker really have absolutely no bearing his success handling glass. This was definitely worth the weekend, a lot of fun, and a touch humbling as he's certainly ranked in the amateur class so try not to judge our pieces to harshly!

OK, so who participated? From our regular cast and crew obviously Eric is involved, you've already met Dana through her profiles in Jewelry Organization Consulting and whittling, so we're only debuting her father Steven Oxenberg. (Shown below assisting Dana and Eric)

Here's the basic premise: we took a two day class at [East Falls Glassworks in Philadelphia, PA](#). The course covers the basics of handling rods, picking up glass, identifying and the function of tools, and obviously, safety factors when working with material over 2,000 degrees.

The class reaped us a bounty of ornaments, slightly crooked mugs (vessels), paperweights, and a few random artwork pieces, or "accidents that we intended to come out that way" I think we call those. This is another great exercise and example of artists crossing into new mediums. It makes you appreciate the years of skill you developed in your own craft when you find yourself at step one of something entirely different, plus it further emphasizes the vast array of talent in the world.



ARTISANS OF THE VALLEY

HAND CRAFTED CUSTOM WOODWORKING



[Artisans of the Valley](#) offers museum quality period reproductions, original designs by commission, and antique restoration/conservation services, hand carving, modern furniture refinishing, onsite furniture repair, hand made walking sticks, and educational programs. Our website is now over 250 pages, including galleries, feature articles, and educational sections, company background, and our new adventure album section. We extend an open invitation to explore our site, and contact us directly with any inquiries or questions you may have.

Eric M. Saperstein is Master of Artisans, Owner, Webmaster, Editor, Bookkeeper, Buyer, Office Manager, Legal Pit-bull, and he's in charge of vacuuming the shop: eric@artisansofthevalley.com

Stanley D. Saperstein, Master Craftsmen, Author, & Historian founded Artisans of the Valley in 1973. Stanley offers historic presentations, impressions, and various lecture series ranging from Civil and Revolutionary War, American Folk Art, and Interactive Role Play of Characters ... sometimes trying to reenact American Chopper episodes in the shop: woodcarver@artisansofthevalley.com



PLENTY OF KITTENS & PUPS TO GO AROUND!

If you don't have a pet, you're an empty person who needs a creature to complete their family! Think about adopting a dog or cat from your local animal shelter. We've been fostering kittens for the Trenton Animal Shelter (TAS) this season and we know there are some great kittens, pups, and adult dogs and cats who are in real need of a new home.

Shown Left, "Allegra" ... aka "Hisser" this pumpkin dwelling little black female spent a few weeks in foster care with Eric and Dana. It didn't take long for her to be spotted and adopted by her new family just before Halloween! Contact Artisans for an up to date spec on any kittens in their care or visit [TAS's Petfinder Page](#) to

find the perfect new member of your family! (Shelter ID NJ43 @ www.petfinder.com)

*Remember there is no acceptable excuse for not having your animals spayed and neutered other than medical (i.e. heart condition). Over 9,000 animals are put to sleep each day in this country. Please help stop overpopulation and the senseless destruction of these poor animals. Ask your vet about the benefits of spaying/neutering your pet. - Trenton Bureau of Animal Control * 72 Escher Street * Trenton, NJ 08609*



2011 PENDING REPORTS

Restorations: One Really Big Folk Art Chess Set, A Walnut Hutch, many more!

Sorry, we're gag ordered on the TV show project ...

The Adventures of Dana and Noodler; Rumor is they are building a deck!

When will Gina (the cute little redhead on the hood) get to drive the Camaro legally?

Taking on the NJ Capital Complex; this should be interesting!

Feature Projects from The Portfolio of Michael Pietras

Well who knows? Bring us more work or we'll just fill the newsletter with kittens!



Our studio hours are by appointment. Please call ahead!

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