



Forecastle Report

Newsletter of the Midwest Model Shipwrights ♦ www.midwestmodelshipwrights.com ♦ February 2010

● Scuttlebutt ●

Commodore **Tim Riggs**, opened the meeting, sans bell, at 7:30 with a crew of 24 eager hands. With no guests to welcome, Tim moved on to notices from the crew prefaced by a call for volunteers to do presentations at future meetings. Tim pointed out that the club needs members to contribute some part of their knowledge to fellow members as a way of making the overall association worthwhile. Contact Tim or Gus, if you think you'd have something to offer.

Treasurer, **Ken Goetz**, reported a favorable balance with sufficient funds to cover our budget. **Ken** says our supply of the small items we have been giving as door prizes every meeting is running out. So, if you have anything you'd like to donate to this drawing, please bring them to the meeting for Ken. Tools, books, parts, anything will help. Thanks, mates.



Tim Riggs awarded our past Commodore, **Sid Wotman**, an *Achievement Award* for his fine service to the club. During his watch, the club grew in membership, thanks, in part, to his efforts and he provided a driving force in seeing through the establishment of our first set of Bylaws. Thanks, mate, for keeping a steady hand on the tiller.

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Dues Notice

Yearly dues are now payable. Your check can be mailed to our Treasurer: **Ken Goetz, 3302 Sarah St., Franklin Park, IL 60131** or you can pay Ken direct at our next meeting. Annual, full year dues remain at \$20 for Regular Membership and \$10 for Associate Membership. Make checks payable to: "Midwest Model Shipwrights". Oh yes, you can also pay in CASH. For those of you who have already paid, thank you.

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2010 OFFICERS & STAFF

President (Commodore) - Tim Riggs.....	(847) 697-9552
Vice Pres (Flag Captain) - Gus Agustin.....	(847) 398-5208
Treasurer (Ship's Purser) - Ken Goetz	(847) 678-4249
Secretary (Ship's Clerk) - Jim Merritt.....	(847) 888-3882
Editor (Signals Officer) - John Mitchell	(847) 392-2259
Photographer (M. Chief) - Leon Sirota	(847) 541-6285

February Meeting Notice

Navigating our Web Site

By Leon Sirota & John Pocius

How to get the most enjoyment out of our new web site will be the topic of discussion being led by our "Webmaster", John Pocius, and our "Chief Photographer", Leon Sirota.

Everything you ever wanted to deal with the internet is concerned, will be even get some of internet mysteries prepared to ask engage in the discussion—you will learn a lot!

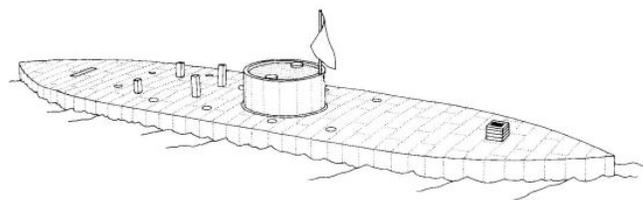


wanted to know about how net, as far as our web site answered. You may your more obscure cleared up, so come questions and discussion—you will

Our next meeting will be at 7:15 p.m. Wednesday, February 17, 2010
At the Community Presbyterian Church
407 Main Street in Mount Prospect

● Ironclads ●

The movie we saw on "Ironclads" really answered all the questions any of us had on the history of this type of warship and, in particular, the details surrounding the famous naval engagement between the *Monitor* and *Merrimac* (CSS *Virginia*) in Hampton Roads, VA.



This battle had far reaching consequences, not only for the US Navy, but also for the military strategies of the US Army relative to an advance on the Confederate capitol of Richmond. Several ships of the "wooden" US Navy conducting a blockade of Hampton Roads were sunk by the *CSS Virginia* before the arrival of the *USS Monitor*.

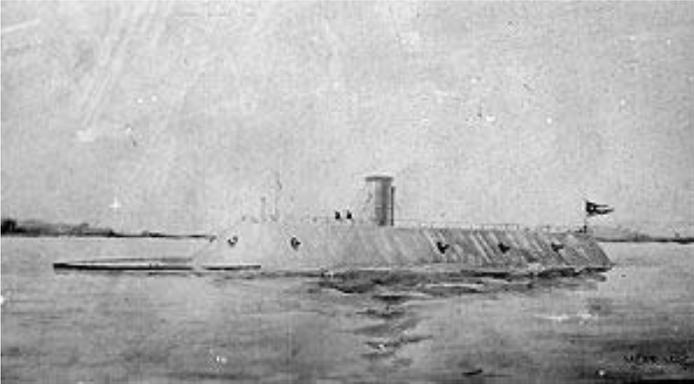
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The video postulated that, although the tactical outcome of the naval engagement was seen as a draw, neither



vessel having put the other out of action, the Union blockade was strategically undone to the degree that the US Army altered its plans for the conquest of Richmond. It was to have included an advance up the James River but, with the *CSS Virginia (Merrimac)* lurking, this became a risk.

We all came away with a new appreciation for the historic events and the unique technology that forever changed the nature of naval warfare.

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Our mate, **Tony Sergios**, contributed a book and a "Midwest Products" kit of the *Sakonnet Daysailer* to be sold by blind auction, with the proceeds going to the Club Treasury. Bob Ivan's bid was the winner. Thanks, Tony, for your generous gift. It made the meeting more exciting for everyone.



It was discovered, by an unlucky few, that the church door bell is out of order. If this condition persists, we will need one of our members to volunteer as a sergeant-at-arms to open the door for late-comers up until the meeting is called to order at 7:30. Please enlist with Tim.

Dave Botton reports that a new web site at www.modelshipjournal.com is worth a visit. It is reported to be the site for "Model Ship Builder Journal".

Kurt Van Dahm reminded us all of the upcoming *37th Annual NRG Conference* being held this year from August 23-29 in Annapolis, MD. A more fitting nautical venue could hardly be found, so it should make this year's gathering something special. To get more information on this, you can log on to the NRG web site at www.thenrg.org for registration forms, etc.

● Ships on Deck ●

John Pocius supplied some great photos of his newest carving project, as well as a detailed write-up on the history of his figures. We are happy to reprint it here with John's kind permission. Fine art and scholarship, mate.

Tlingit Chieftain Sculpture by John Pocius

The figure represents a Tlingit Chieftain of the mid to late 1800's. Scale: 1:9.



The Tlingit People

Tlingit people live on the beaches and islands in the southeastern Alaska Panhandle. They are the northernmost nation of the Northwest Coast peoples. Tlingit is pronounced "TLIN-git" or "KLIN-kit". This is an English pronunciation of their native word Lingit, which means "people". In their own language, the first sound is a 'breathy l' that does not exist in English.

Wood Clan Hat

Passed from generation to generation the elaborately carved conical clan hat represents the group's principal crest animal, in this case the Frog. The hats are worn primarily at ceremonies. The conical shape was similar to that of woven bark hats, a form no doubt related to the characteristic conical straw hats common through much of Asia. The lower jaw of the frog is inset with a mask, carved with a human face. The face has mother of pearl eyes and teeth. The hat is topped by a series of cedar bark rings, one each for the great ceremonies (potlatches) sponsored by the wearer and his or her family. An ermine pelt is attached to the top of the rings.

The Tlingit are exceedingly frightened of frogs; they are horrified at the thought of touching one, and do not even like looking at photographs of them. The apparent reason for their terror of this animal is its association with witchcraft. Frogs exude a slime from their skin which is thought to be very poisonous and fatal to smaller creatures.

Raven Rattle

Carried by the elite at feasts and rituals, these raven rattles were highly prized objects. The body of this rattle represents Raven, a mischievous and powerful mythological being. Some conjecture that this bird is in the process of performing one of his most admirable acts: stealing the sun.

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It seems that prior to this event, a malevolent creature, unwilling to share the sun's warmth and light with humankind, kept the celestial body hidden in a box. Raven tricked this selfish being into letting him into the box, and he quickly picked up the treasure with his beak and flew away. On the rattle, a small reddish object can be seen in the raven's mouth: that is the sun which is about to be spit into the sky to illuminate the world. It is during this event that the raven was burnt black by the sun.

A shaman is reclining on the back of the raven, with attenuated angular limbs, and hands wrapped around the splayed legs, his highly stylized mask-like face with a short tongue projecting into the mouth of a small frog, held in the long narrow beak of another bird-like creature, probably a kingfisher, with a flattened backswept crest. On the belly of the raven is the face of a hawk.

The rattles were traditionally held with the belly facing up to keep the Raven from flying away. In most archival photographs the rattles are held right-side up. Perhaps the photographers, ignorant of this custom, asked the poser to hold the rattle upright so they could see the details.

Button Blanket

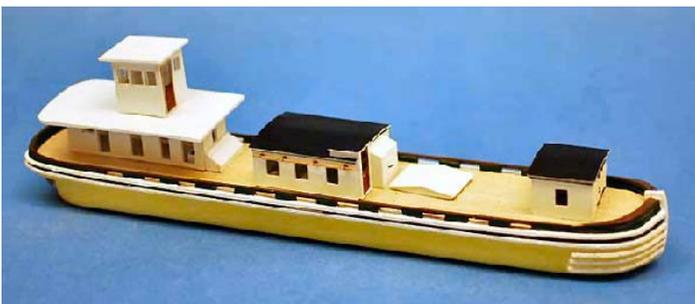
From around 1800, Pacific Northwest Coast Indian tribes (like the Haida, Tsimshian, Tlingit, Nisga'a and others) often traded furs for woolen blankets from maritime European traders and later the Hudson's Bay company. Rather than sleeping equipment, the blankets were made into robes for ceremonial purposes; they were worn over the shoulders like capes. Most blankets are made of dark blue duffel with red flannel appliqué outlined with pearl buttons. The central crest typically portrayed a symbol of the wearer's family heritage. Symbols found are the frog, raven, whale, thunderbird, etc. The design on the back of the Tlingit Chieftain is that of a frog. ❖

John also contributed another project for view; that of a *Fred Martin Skiff* waterline model with rower, dog



& ducks in a 3/16" = 1' scale. This set is actually four years old, having been planned for an earlier diorama. The hull is lapstrake, as opposed to the single-plank version used on the original work. So realistic it makes you wish you were there, mate.

Paul Pollowy has made significant progress on his 1:96 model of the *City of Peking* I&M Canal Boat. The hull is nearly completed, ship's cabins have been built, forward crew's quarters and storage shed are done, as are the Captain's quarters. Most of the structures were built out of styrene, as it was easier and faster to work with. The plan is to make the engine room and pilot house open to show more details. One or two months to complete and then it's on to Manitowoc. This model is a composite of scratch building plus a kit for the hull.



Interestingly enough, when this vessel was converted from an "Illinois & Michigan Canal" horse drawn barge to steam, the height of the pilot house prevented it from passing under any of the I&M bridge overpasses; thus it was confined to operation on the Illinois River only. A most intriguing model.

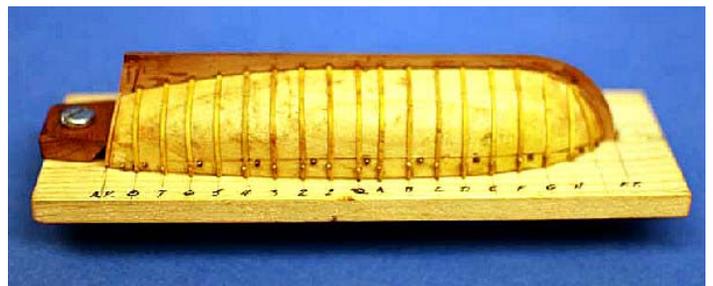


Doc Williams is busy working on what he calls a "fun diversion", which is a 40+ year-old cabin cruiser kit he is finishing off for a client. Original cost of the kit was \$1.00



and it looks like the owner is about to get a lot more than his money worth when it's finished. The balsa and bass wood materials had become so dried out that paint wants to check when applied and the hull has a fatal twist. Cherry veneer will be used to dress up the outside cabin. Mounting bolts, passing through brass tubing, fasten to nuts that have been epoxied to blocks set into the hull. Well, it keeps Doc indoors during all the snow storms.

Ray Oswald has been giving us a real symposium on how to build ship's boats from scratch and we hope everyone has been paying close attention because you don't want to miss a word he says. The example that Ray is using is a 7/32-scale model of the *HMS Bounty's* launch, made famous by Capt. Wm. Bligh's epic 3000-mile open-sea voyage after his crew mutinied.



Ribs are all in place over the plug form, as are the keel and stern and its all ready for planking. Planks were cut and shaped using a Preac saw and thickness sander.

Based on an estimated 4"- wide plank, the scale width

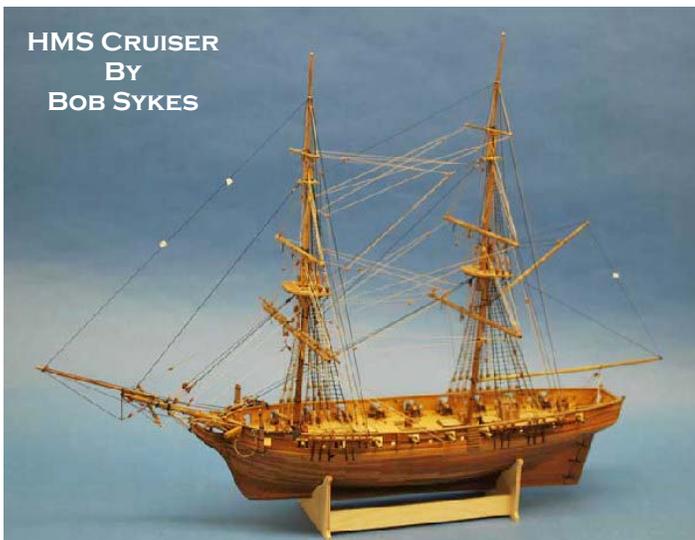
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of each plank is calculated at each of the rib stations, the center rib being the bench mark for determining how many planks must fit onto the hull. Plank outlines were drawn for each plank, using that offset and a ship's curve to connect all the rib measurement points. If you've done your work carefully, all the planks will fit exactly. Wow - that's really great detail, mate, to work in 0.001" increments!

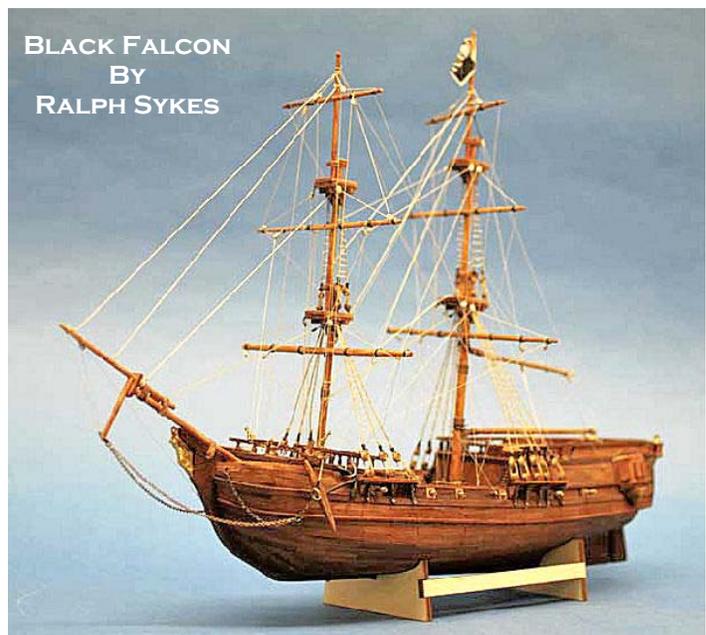
Bob Sykes has made amazing progress on his (1:64) "Calder Craft" model of *HMS Cruiser*. As a testament to the quality of this brand, Bob says everything went well



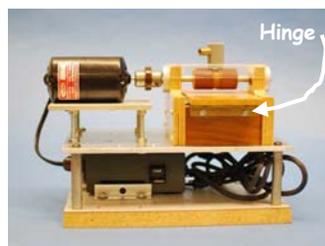
from the start without the usual problems one finds on many kits. Bob says he likes to stay up late to work on his models and that may help explain his great productivity. It doesn't diminish the quality of his work, however.

His next project is the whale ship *Charles W. Morgan* and his dilemma is how to reproduce the bricks used to build the oven for rendering whale blubber. Ideas such as making the bricks out of wood blocks or using HO-gage bricks from model railroad parts are considered. Any suggestions? Maybe cutting a brick pattern into a sheet of wood and then painting on brick and mortar colors?

Ralph Sykes has put the finishing touches on his model of the pirate ship *Black Falcon*, Captain Kidd's 18th century brigantine by "Mantua" (1:100). Ralph's work habits do not resemble his brother's - he goes to bed at an early hour - but his skills certainly do, so the end result is a very beautifully built model.



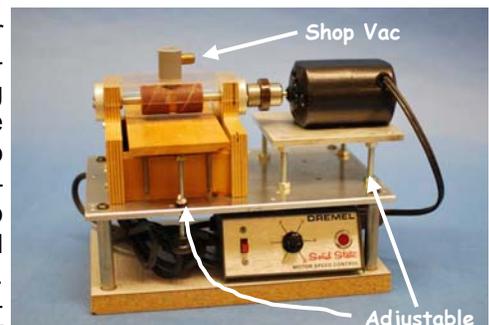
Bob Filipowski scratch-built a miniature drum sander 12 years ago that he uses frequently. In need of a bigger, more robust motor, he recently upgraded this tool and greatly improved its performance. His design is simple



enough that most modelers should be able to build one for themselves. We hope these photos will help.

The new motor is similar to one used on a "Dremel" table saw and is run with a "Dremel" speed control for 110V, 5AMP motors (speed control is attached to the base using Velcro, so it can be easily removed for other uses). The motor mount was made adjustable to allow for alignment of the coupling

between motor and sander shaft. Bob installed a fitting on top of the sanding disc to permit attachment of a shop vac for removal of sawdust. One-inch sanding drums of



various grits were used to make the sanding drum on the tool - paper was removed from the store-bought drums and re-glued onto the tool's drum. The pivoting table under the sanding disc is adjusted for desired thickness by turning the elevating nut on the support bolt. Springs return the table, when the adjustment is reversed. The key to doing exacting work is the flatness of the moving table - use of particle board or laminate is recommended. The frame base is made of Baltic Ply, and the sanding table is mounted using a piano hinge. Great tool, mate.

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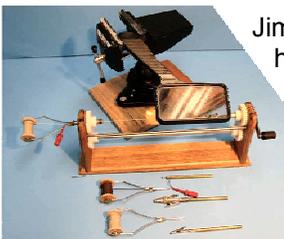
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Jim Merritt has arrived at the rigging stage on his model of the *Yacht Mary*. His big decision point here was whether to use the kit's string or go for "MoRope". He opted for the latter and the results look very fine. The blocks supplied in the kit



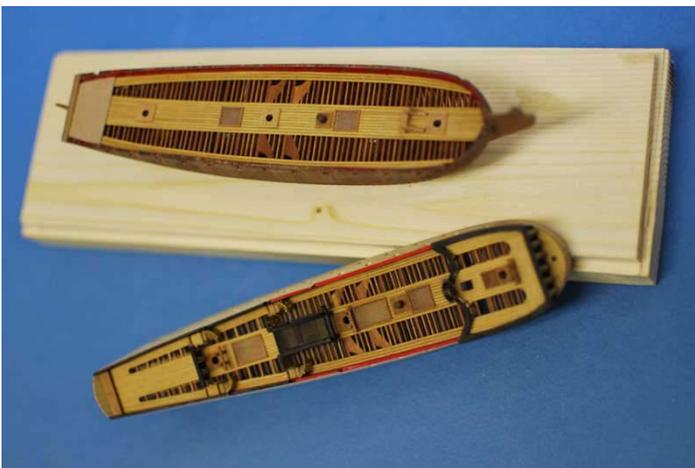
blocks supplied in the kit

were also inferior in Jim's eye, so he bought some upgrades from "Ship Chandler" and tumbled them with the "Block Buster" from "Model Shipways" to produce an acceptable result. This continues to be a real kit bashing with very fine results.



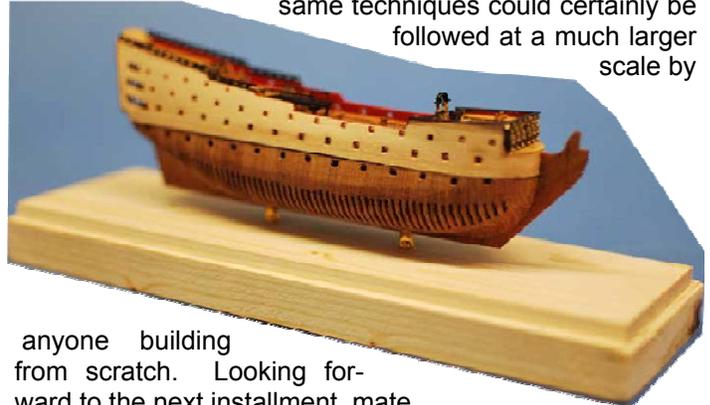
Jim also showed us the serving tool he built to make his work easier. It's a fine collection of parts that do the job of winding serving line onto rigging in a very neat fashion. The magnifier is an added plus for weary eyes!

Gus Agustin says he has completed all the decks as well as the deck furniture on his *St. George*, ca 1701 (1:384) and will start planking the hull. The really neat thing about this job is the way he has built the upper and lower

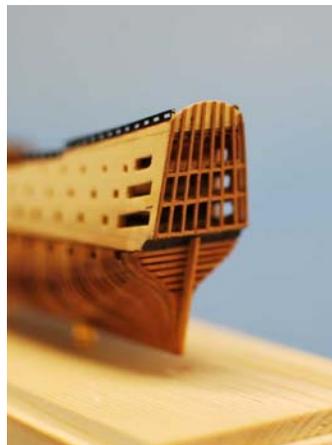


hull separately. Even though you can view all the lower deck beams at this stage, once the upper hull is installed they will all be out of view. So we need to record the

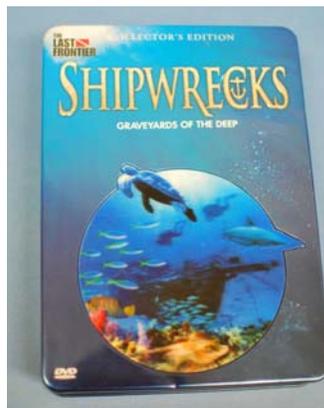
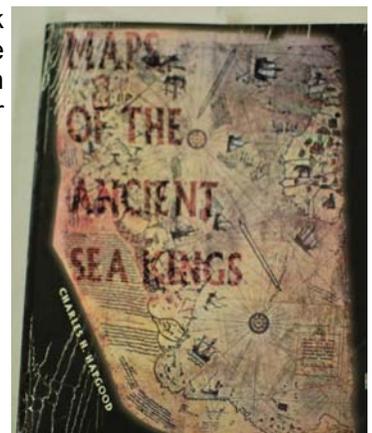
images now as an historical record. Progress on this model has been a real joy for all of us to follow, as the fine work has progressed in such an orderly fashion. The same techniques could certainly be followed at a much larger scale by



anyone building from scratch. Looking forward to the next installment, mate.



Tim Riggs gave us a look at the book "Maps of the Ancient Sea Kings", which should keep any ship lover fascinated for ages.



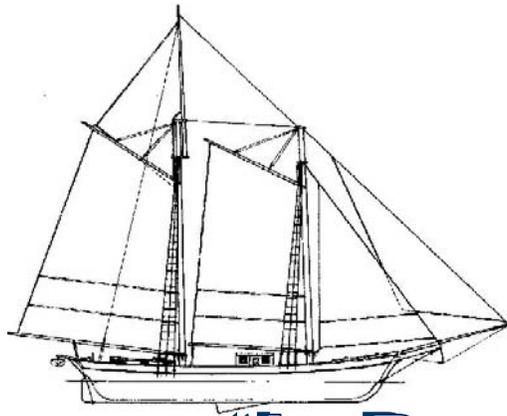
Another recommendation was this DVD on the subject of "Shipwrecks". We haven't checked the local library, but that might be a good place to start a search for what should be an exciting subject.

And last, but not least, was the micrometer thickness gage shown by **Ray Oswalt**. You know he knows how to use this tool for making planks!





John R. Mitchell, Editor
2011 N Charter Point Dr. • Arlington Hts., IL 60004



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