WOODWORKING CLASS by: Mike Cunningham

Saturday, February 7th, I attended the second in a series of classes on various aspects of our great hobby. The class was held at the classroom of our good corporate friends at Ideal Saw Works in downtown Fresno. The SJFWA Education Committee, chaired by Louis Volpp, created the series. Louis started the series by giving an excellent class on planning your woodworking project. His committee then enlisted other instructors to talk about their areas of interest and expertise.

This month, the class, Drawing your project and measuring it, was taught by Craig Miller of Visalia. Craig is a third generation craftsman who was taught by his father, a general contractor. Craig's knowledge was apparent and he methodically went though each subject discussing various drawing tools and techniques. He began by saying that a quick sketch of your project coupled with accurate measurements may be all you need. He showed numerous drawing tools used by draftsmen to create a representation of the intended project. I was impressed with his knowledge and helpfulness. Did you know that you can erase pencil marks on hardwood using denatured alcohol? Craig spent the first part of the class discussing the right pencil to use and lead hardness. Most pencils are

#2 lead which is too soft so Craig recommends #3 or #4 and told us where to get them. He also covered the uses of Triangles, T-Squares, French Curves and other drawing tools. It brought back memories of my junior high school mechanical drawing class.

After a short break, Craig jumped into measuring your project and the tools you might use to do it. Various tape measures, yard sticks, machinist squares, protractors, calipers, and other specialty measuring tools were discussed. One of many tips I learned was to paint the back of a metal yardstick with flat white paint and use it as a “story stick” marking essential dimensions for your project on it then erasing it when you finished. I learned not to depend on combination squares, as most are not accurate or square. This segment was a very valuable one for me and I learned a lot.

The audience also was helpful in providing useful information. Those in attendance included, Ken Kenoyer, Glen Gray, Bill Lynam, and our president, David Dunlap. Even Louis made an appearance with his daughter’s dog as body guard. During the breaks the students made a beeline for the showroom to make purchases.

All in all, it was a very pleasant 3+ hours in which was valuable to me as a journeyman woodworker and new to the club. This class exemplifies a major reason for me to be associated with this group. The combined knowledge of it's members and the willingness to share that knowledge is what makes the San Joaquin Fine Woodworkers Association such a great organization.