

# THE TOOL TABLE

The Newsletter of the Richmond Antique Tool Society

VOLUME 18, No. 1

WWW.RICHMONDANTIQUETOOLS.COM

FEBRUARY 2012

**Next meeting  
Friday February 24**

## **Agenda**

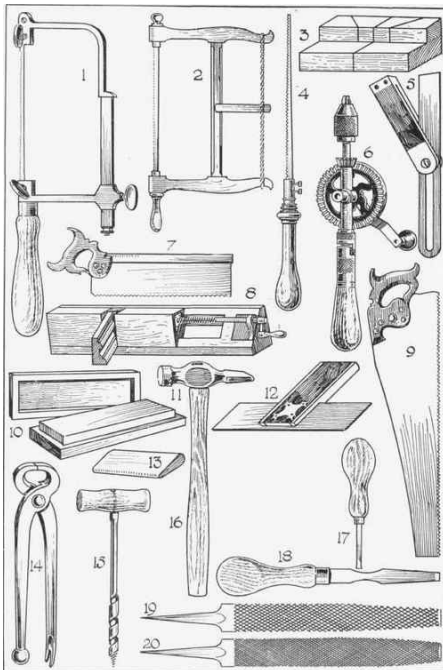
**6:00-7:00 p.m. Tool talk & sales**

**7:00-7:15 p.m. Tool auction**

**7:15-7:30 p.m. General meeting**

**7:30-8:30 p.m. John Balasa –  
Wood graining**

**8:30-10:00 p.m. Tool talk & sales**



**THE TOOL TABLE is the official publication of the Richmond Antique Tool Society and is published bi-monthly, in February, April, June, September and November of each year.**

**Editor & Layout.....Bill Taggart  
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## The President's Plane Talk

December, January and now February...time flies and it is tool time again...back for our regular bi-monthly meetings at Pocahontas Middle School in Henrico County. I said it that way because we picked up six new members at our Tool Show at the Show Place in January. Hopefully, we'll see some new faces as we welcome a previous guest speaker, back by popular demand: John Balasa, master wood grainer and painter. It has been over 12 years since he demonstrated his impressive skills to our club. Numerous RATS have asked if he could be our guest speaker again and we are lucky to get John back for the night. This will be one meeting not to miss!!! We will have our regular tool tables with dealers selling old tools, our commission-free tool auction (members can bring up to 10 items to auction and you keep 100% of the hammer price) and free unlimited tool talk throughout the night. See you this Friday night, February 24<sup>th</sup>. If Henrico Schools are closed for snow Friday Feb 24, the meeting date will be moved to Friday night, March 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Our December "Gathering" was a traditional success with plenty of food, tools and friendship to warm up the Legion Hall on a cold rainy night. Again, the year ends with this event and a new year starts at the Tool Show in mid-January. The later date for the Tool Show this year sparked a crowded Show Place. It was packed and tool dealers reported that the sales were brisk and buyers were spending their hard earned money to buy old tools. Got to love that!!!

With that said, Wayne Thornton has put together a neat story in memory of Guy Burch...read on. A nice overview of our guest speaker, John Balasa also is on the following page...read on. Also, let me mention that Richard Barton has organized our RATS to be at the Woodworking Show, March 2-4 in Fredericksburg. More details about how you can support our club that 3-day weekend will be discussed at our Friday night meeting. See you on February 24...Friday nights have never been better!!!

Plane and Simple,

Rick Long

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Richmond Antique Tool Society  
 c/o Dick Levy  
 556 Pantela Dr.  
 Richmond, VA 23235

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To receive THE TOOL TABLE and  
 RATS announcements via e-mail,  
 contact:  
 w.taggart@verizon.net

OUR GUEST SPEAKER  
 JOHN BALASA



I was born in 1951 in Peterreve, part of Hungary prior to the Treaty of Trianon in 1920. I took vocational school training from 1967 to 1969 as a decorative painter.

I immigrated to the United States in 1972 and resided in New York, where I worked with interior decorators predominantly in Manhattan, on up-scale jobs. I have resided in Virginia since 1981, with my wife Agnes and two children, Jonathan and Gabriella, and have been working for the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts for over twenty years.

I have a full range of expertise in marbling, wood graining, gold leafing, glazing, etc. Some of my work can be seen in the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, the Chrysler Museum, and historical places such as Shadwell House in Charlottesville (built by Peter Jefferson), the Robert E. Lee Chapel in Lexington, Virginia, Cheepokes Plantation, and many private residential homes. Since 1989 I have been conducting workshops on painted finishes (faux finish). Although predominantly self-taught, I have been painting under Ken Hudler, a fine portrait painter.

I recently traveled to Hungary to paint under Toth Gabor, a true Renaissance painter and my mentor. My inspirations come from the old masters, whose work is mystical. Painting seems easy until you know about painting, then it becomes harder and harder. This is a driving force for the artist. You never know enough. Once, an old master said in his late 70's, "Now I'm beginning to understand what I was doing all along."

See John's work at his website:  
<http://www.painter.hu/balasa/>

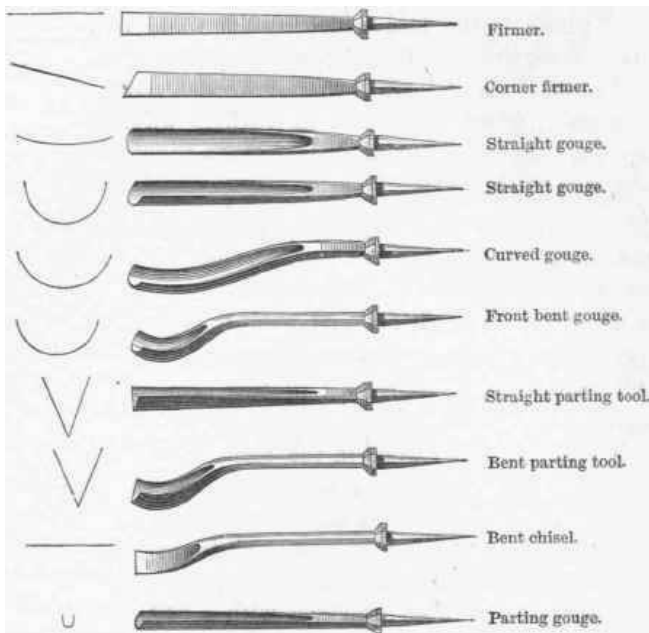
**RATS Calendar 2012**

March 2-4, 2012	The Woodworking Shows	Fredericksburg Expo & Convention Ctr, Fredericksburg, VA
April 20, 2012	RATS Regular meeting	Pocahontas Middle School, 12000 Three Chopt Rd.
June 8, 2012	RATS Regular meeting	Pocahontas Middle School, 12000 Three Chopt Rd.

GUY BURCH'S LEGACY  
By Wayne Thornton

A few weeks ago fellow RATS Hunter Cox, Bill Taggart and I decided to get together to work on a project. Hunter suggested we carve some spoons, so I broke out the patterns I had copied from Guy Burch each time I visited him. Bill showed up right on time and Hunter showed up a little later. Each of us picked a piece of cherry firewood and set to work.

Hunter and I primarily used the shaving horses while Bill used a shaving horse as well as the bench vise. Bill's use of both tools reminded me of Guy, because Guy used the bench vise to do his hollowing and smoothing. In our project, we ended up using a hewing hatchet, adze, draw knife, scorps, rasps, spoke shaves, scrapers, hand saw, gouges, brace and bit, marking pen, patterns and the best gauge of all, our hands. We could have used fewer tools, but it wouldn't have been as much fun.



It was a nice long evening. A couple beers, cigars, a sharp spoke shave, shaving horse and old tools and the time flies by. With the exception of a little shaping and fine tuning, I think everyone pretty much completed their spoon.

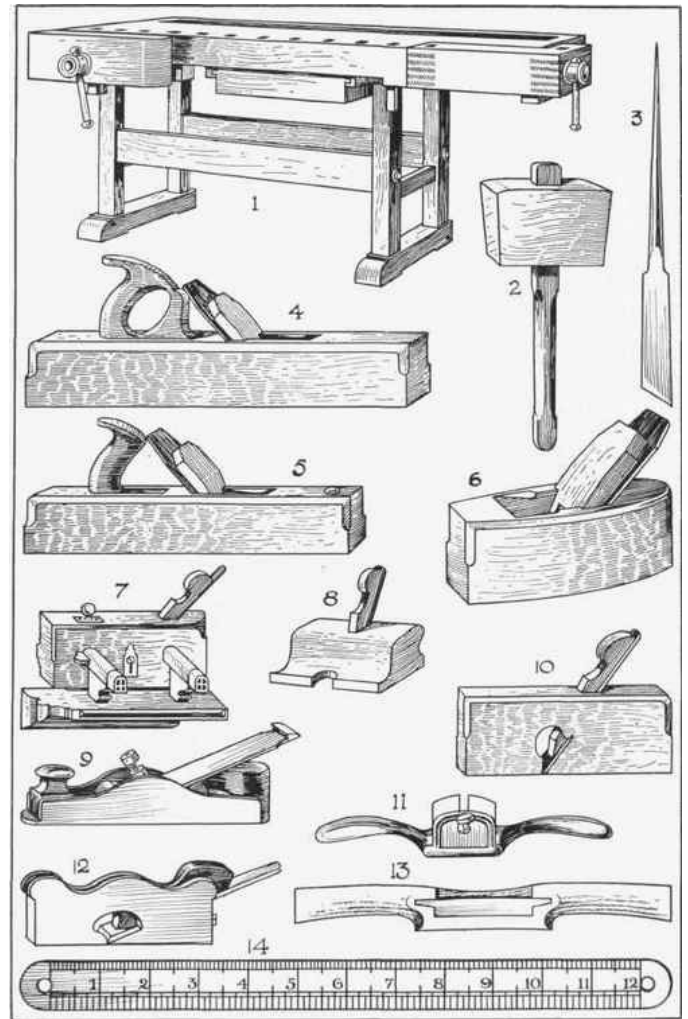
I carried my spoon into James River Wood Carvers one Thursday afternoon to put on the final touches and ran into Guy Burch's son. I told him we had used his Dad's patterns to make our spoons and it brought a smile to his face. (James River Wood Carvers

meet for open carving every Thursday 1pm-4pm and everyone is welcome).

Guy Burch was generous with his knowledge and time and I benefited immensely from his tutelage. He was truthful when I showed him the very first spoon I had ever made. He quipped: "That's a hell of a weapon you have there." Guy encouraged me to make my spoons thinner, more elegant, and showed me the tools and techniques to these ends. I hope I was able to pass on some of what Guy taught me to Bill and Hunter.

I look forward to doing another project with Bill and Hunter and maybe some of the other RATS will join us as well. Does anyone have a suggestion for the next Project?

Wayne Thornton



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