TALLAHASSEE WOODCRAFTERS SOCIETY

JUNE 2011 NEWSLETTER

CURRENT OFFICERS
PRESIDENT: Spencer Cullen…(850)878-8409
TREASURER: Austin Tatum…(850)561-1400
NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Joe Doker… (850)509-1337 e-mail tws@redbaystudio.com

Next Meeting: Tues, June 14th @7:00 p.m.

The June meeting will be an open forum round table format. Bring your questions and ideas to share.

Don't Forget your Show and Tell items.

The meeting will be held at our regular meeting place, Tri States Automotive, 745 W. Gaines Street in Tallahassee. (see map on next page)

Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month.

Highlights From the May Meeting

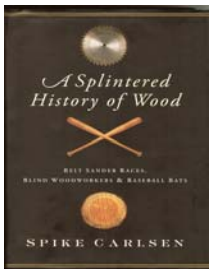
I (Joe Doker), did not attend the May meeting and from what I've heard, I missed some good information about hand planes as presented by **Mike Reilly**. Our Treasurer, **Austin Tatum**, was kind enough to fill in with taking photos at the meeting—some of which you see here.

Mike Reilly Demonstrates Planing

Buy Sell Or Trade

If you have items for this column, please contact the newsletter editor.

SPLINTERS: excerpt from Spike Carlson's book "A Splintered History of Wood"



TRAINS: RIDING THE WOODEN RAILS

Early railroads in America may conjure up images of "riding the iron rails" and "steel horses," but those images are built from the wrong material. If you were standing beside a segment of track stretching across the United States in the early 1800s, this is what you'd see: railcars made of wood, rolling on wood wheels reinforced by a thin strap of iron, riding on wood rails

(Continued on page 2)

(**Splinters,** *Continued from page 1)*

(yes, rails), supported by wood railroad ties. The fireman would be pitching chunks of wood into the firebox. And in many cases the cargo being hauled would be lumber. Wood was, and still is, a major role player when it comes to trains.

Early American railways were copied from "wagonways" built in England as early as 1604, primarily for hauling coal and which used wooden rails. Since wood was so plentiful in America and iron so expensive, early tracks were constructed in the manner described by one early Michigan settler: "They took timbers as long as trees...hewed them on each side and flattened them down to about a foot in thickness, then laid them on blocks which were placed in the bed of the road."

Early American trains—up through the Civil War—burned wood. Since early steam locomotives consumed so much wood and water, "wood-up" stations were built every 10 to 25 miles along the tracks. One wood yard at Columbus, Nebraska, measured half a mile in length and stocked a thousand cords of wood. In the 1850s, steam engines devoured four million to five million cords annually.

Even today, trains run on wood. The seven hundred million railroad ties that support the 220,000 miles of track in the United States are replaced at a rate of fifteen million to twenty million ties a year. Though concrete and composite substitutes exist, 95 percent of all ties in the United States remain wood; they have the necessary give, spike-holding ability, and when treated, longevity, which makes them difficult to beat.

Directions to the regular meeting location.