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WOOD CASTLE Times



Summer 2003

FOUNDER AND
PRESIDENT OF
WOOD CASTLE



Some Words from Ron Loe

It took awhile for our wet and cloudy spring weather to give up its grip and let summer shine. With temperatures in the mid-80s during the day and low 50s at night, we yearn to be in the bright outdoors looking for lazy river water, softball games or, for me, a new back road for my motorcycle (and me) to explore.

About 40 employees strong, my small company works with commitment and drive all year long, no matter the weather. But I've noticed that the sunny weather somehow affects our energy level. There's more spring to our step. We're friendlier and tidier by a notch. And we're happier. What is it about more light that affects us so?

I'm not sure there's any mystery, really. Light is energy. When we perceive more of it, our own energy levels rise. Sunlight powers photosynthesis and greens our world; I believe it also recharges us humans in positive ways.

We recently replaced our production plant lighting. Our old lamps did a fine job, but we learned that replacing them with a newer style not only saved us money (they're much more efficient), they gave us more light to boot. 40% more light, we learned.

Now, our plant is lit almost as brightly as if there were no walls or roof. Shadows are diminished. It's easier to spot imperfections in grain or workmanship. Our eyes are more relaxed and ... we seem to have more bounce in our step.

Of course, we'd be love to be outdoors, where the real sun shines. Especially at this time of year. But when the clouds shroud us during the cooler months, at least it's nice to have light that hints at summer and helps us be more efficient. That makes me happy – even if my motorcycle mopes.



Dimond
Center
Hotel
Anchorage
Alaska

The Cascadia line (originally called Danica) is our best seller and has had that honor for ten years now. Other enduring lines are our Tuscany and Mission occasional tables.

Success may have a downside, however. Some may assume that Wood Castle does very little new product development, resting instead on the security of steady-selling collections. But this perception is wrong, as a visit to our factory would quickly show.

In addition to manufacturing popular collections like Cascadia, Wood Castle also produces custom institutional projects, such as four- and five-star hospital-

ity properties.

We recently furnished one of Alaska's newest inns, the Dimond Center Hotel.

Wood

Castle helped design the beds, case goods, and desks for guest rooms. We also built the occasional tables, the concierge desk, and even an oversized chess table for the lobby. The warmth of the maple and walnut helped balance the cool-toned contemporary styling of the project.

Projects such as these challenge us to design, develop, manufacture and ship within budget and on time. Change orders and delivery complications (often the rule rather than the exception) further test our performance efficiencies.

How is this relevant to our national

retail partners? Among other significant benefits, we believe our biggest reward from custom project work is in the area of product design. As hospitality property owners and designers push us for new ideas, we necessarily broaden our experience in bringing fresh design concepts to the marketplace.

An upper-tier, soon-to-open property near San Francisco, the Bay Landing Hotel, commissioned Wood Castle to furnish its rooms in all cherry wood. One stunning piece featured an armoire atop a two-drawer chest. The graceful curves of the panels and moldings reflect a European-traditional feel.

The fluting and other concepts incorporated in this design migrated to another project, Shilo Inn (Seaside, Ore.). These ideas, in turn, have "pollinated" a new prototype line, *French Chateau*, featuring elegant lines reminiscent of the Louis Phillipe era.

Wood Castle's new product development is continual. From our customer's concepts as well as our own prototypes come some of the most enduring furniture lines in the industry.



Bay
Landing
Hotel
San Francisco



Shilo
Inn



French
Chateau

Face to Face

meet Team Wood Castle

It's
Mack
hard to
is
leave
back!
family



Mack Mayfield's lean, suntanned face shows a few creases, hinting at his 45 years. He talks softly about the twists and turns of his past, smiling easily, his straight teeth gleaming beneath his mustache. He's happy where he is in life.

Born here in Albany, he shared his youth with three brothers. He left his family and high school for the Army in 1976. The military provided structure, he says, though few challenges. "I did a lot of guard duty," Mack says. "At least I picked up my G.E.D. (high school diploma)."

After the Army came two marriages and, regrettably, two divorces. Mack had started with Wood Castle during this time, but now he had another job: Mr. Mom, a single parent in charge of two kids.

The good news: Ron and Shirley Loe (founders of Wood Castle). "They really helped me through that time," Mack says. If he needed to attend to the kids' needs, time off was always granted. "I loved working for Wood Castle. It was the best job I ever had," he said.

When the plant burned in 1996, Mack stayed on but left in 1998, lured by another, "better" job. "I feel like I'm leaving home," he told Ron and Shirley then.

The new job ended soon when an accident aggravated a childhood spinal problem, forcing surgery. While recuperating, Mack picked up an associate's degree in drafting at the local community college. He tinkered with wood working at home.

Near the end of his college work, Ron asked Mack to help part time tutoring Frank, the operations manager, in AutoCad, a design tool on the PC. Mack returned to full time last November.

"I'm home again – to the best employer I ever had," Mack says with a grin. "And I hope to stay until I retire."

Nice to have Mack back in the family. And, speaking of family, Mack will begin a new one in July when he marries Christina. We wish them the best.

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... did you know?

Furniture Facts: A Moving Experience

... remember your armoire we left on the edge of the balcony ...?

It's one thing to schlep a refrigerator. Moving fine wood furniture is another matter altogether. Depending on the value (market or emotional) of your furniture, you may wish to contract professional help. Rule of thumb: pros may charge three times what it would cost you to do your own move. But reputable movers are usually bonded and insured. If they break it (rare), they pay for it.

If you do it yourself, consider the guidelines below to minimize frustration, damage and disappointment. These suggestions apply for moving any fine wood furniture. (Caveat: these tips are not inclusive nor are they necessarily applicable in all cases or for all items.)

- **Move furniture point A to point B – skip point C if you can.** Moving an item just once or twice is the ideal. Know, however, that the chance of accidental damage rises dramatically each extra time it is handled. If possible, plan where the furniture will be placed before the move and place it there first.
- **The most valuable furniture you own is the one you're moving now.** Pretend you're moving a Smithsonian antiquities. Heightened focus on each item will help assure the safe arrival of all pieces.
- **Lift and support; no sliding or dragging.** Furniture without castors is not designed to be shoved around on a floor, hard or carpeted. Use a dolly or hand truck. By hand, lift from the bottom. Support all of an item's weight when lifting/moving.
- **Big stuff: choose hand truck or dolly or risk folly.** Blanket wrap and cinch/tie to the hand truck or dolly. A little precaution will avoid embarrassment, damage and injury.
- **Go forward, not backward.** Carpets, door thresholds, and other surprises are trip hazards, whether moving furniture by hand or by wheels. Use a spotter to help guide and steady the load.
- **Wrap cautiously and well.** Choose an appropriate wrap; even conventional moving blankets may damage softer finishes requiring lintless wrapping material. Wrap tightly; vehicle vibration may cause wrapping to rub and mar a finish. Before moving, clean the furniture's exterior; use newly cleaned wrap.
- **Fill spaces with pillows or blankets.** To help minimize swings in temperature and humidity, which can seriously damage wood furniture, fill void (drawers, armoires) with fluffy pillows and blankets. Close and secure drawers and doors. Avoid filling with heavy items.
- **Avoid stacking.** Unless carefully wrapped, boxed and tied down, loading fine furniture (or other heavy objects!) on top of fine furniture risks serious damage. Even blankets can mar finishes after miles of vibration and weight.
- **Golden rule?** Imagine you're a fragile piece of furniture stuck in a moving van for a long haul, then unloaded and carried into a house. Treat your furniture as you would want to be treated.

Spring contest...

...and the winner is...



[Drumroll, please ...] **Erin Gordon** (Dania, Lynnwood, Wash.) took the prize this time with 60 valid words squeezed out of the word CASTLE. She'll soon set up a brand new Wood Castle twin bed in her home. Congratulations, Erin!

(Erin's teenage daughter, Jenna, helped mom. Unsuccessful in the Winter Contest, they nonetheless were keen on entering again, since Jenna "REALLY wanted a

Castle bed," to quote her mother. But in her haste this time, Jenna started from a misunderstanding that this contest involved *two* words, WOOD and CASTLE. Only after coming up with 177 words did Jenna and mom discover that just the word CASTLE was required. Thanks, Jenna, for ALL your efforts!)

Summer Contest: squeeze the word **SUMMERTIME** for as many words as you can. See Revised Rules below.

New Award: \$250 toward the purchase of any Wood Castle product, redeemable from our inventory (subject to availability) at wholesale pricing. Delivered on our next truck or by special arrangement.

Revised Rules: Any employee of an authorized reseller of Wood Castle products and services (excluding Wood Castle employees) may enter. Mail entries with business card/contact info to Wood Castle, c/o Summer 2003 Contest, 29855 Hwy 34, Albany OR 97321 (no faxes, please). Entries must be received at Wood Castle no later than September 1, 2003. Extract as many words as possible from the subject word, using only the letters comprising the subject word. No letter may be used more often than it occurs in the subject word. Winner to be notified prior to next newsletter. Contest rules may change without notice. **Acceptable entries:** Unabbreviated English words in current usage; normally uncapitalized words; plurals that are not formed with an ending "s"; words that have standalone meaning (not dependent on phrase).

Sidemarks

Cheers at the Back Bar... Soaring columns, gleaming marble counter tops, and arched beveled mirrors – back bars are truly "architectural furniture" treasures. Around the end of the 19th century, the Brunswick-Balke-Collender Company (of billiard table fame) made 95% of all back bars from a special factory in Dubuque. But ghosted gold rush towns, World War I mobilization and Prohibition restrictions conspired to flatten the foam of many saloons. The few cherry, oak or mahogany back bars that remain today, however, stand as proud, silent witnesses to remarkable craftsmanship. Perhaps that calls for a toast...

Sidemarks