

# Our President's Pen

By Paul Knoop, EPFG President

"More than ever, it would seem, the success or failure of the art market appears inexorably linked with the situation of the world's major financial markets, notably Wall Street" (ABN May, 2001) Is it just us, or are most of you experiencing a downturn in the framing business? Not that I am wishing anyone ill, but I sure hope it is not something we are doing (or not doing) that makes it seem like everything is slow. In any event, this month's meeting in the North Sound area is devoted to those things we can do to survive a slowing economy. I have asked several framers with outstanding reputations and many years of experience to share some of their ideas of what has worked for them in the past slow periods, and almost as importantly, what has not worked. Knowing that Bill and June Bounds gallery in Burlington is a long way, and with the rising gas prices, please contact someone in your area about sharing a ride. In addition to saving a few \$, you will have a chance to discuss some ideas on the program, since it is to be an open forum.

Since I mentioned the Bounds, congratulations are in order for June, who recently passed her CPFF test. Well done! Other framers from our area who also passed the Certification Test are: Wendy Deal, Lawrence Deal, and Marcia Hall all three from The Frame Works, in Wenatchee; Brooke Langlois, You & I Framing Kennewick, WA; and Julia Heinzmann, Portland, OR. All of these folks took the CPF test at our Education Festival in March of this year. Congratulations to all of these new CPF's, we know how hard you worked for this honor.

And, the winner of our \$25 business card drawing at the last meeting was Christine Camerer, of the Bonney Lake Ben Franklin frame Shop. She asked that the check be made out to Frank's Fabrics for Framers, as they have been wanting to try some of his products. Congratulations, Christine. You, too, have a chance for that \$25, payable to one of our advertisers. All you have to do is show up at a meeting with one of your business cards, and we will take care of the rest.

One final note concerns our Lending Library. To refresh your memory, any member of EPFG can take advantage of the books, tapes, and other materials in our Library. Simply contact the Librarian, Bob Holcumb, of Millennium Gallery to arrange for shipping to you, or pick up your choices at a monthly meeting. The only charge to you is any postage and/or packing. Generally, materials can be kept for a month, but longer periods can be arranged with Bob. See the listing of materials elsewhere in the Newsletter, and watch for some new acquisitions planned in the next several months. If there is anything special you would like to have added to the Library, let us know.

Thanks for reading, Paul



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**Inside this month's  
edition of the EPFG  
newsletter.**

Letter from the  
President,  
Contents of  
Library,  
Comparing mat  
cutters,  
Classified Ads,  
New  
advertisers,  
Rep swap, and  
much much  
more inside!

**Next meeting:  
June 12th @  
William Bounds  
Gallery, Burlington**

How to contact us

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Digital artwork is requested.  
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For change of address include old and new address information.

Publishing deadline is 20th of the month prior to distribution.

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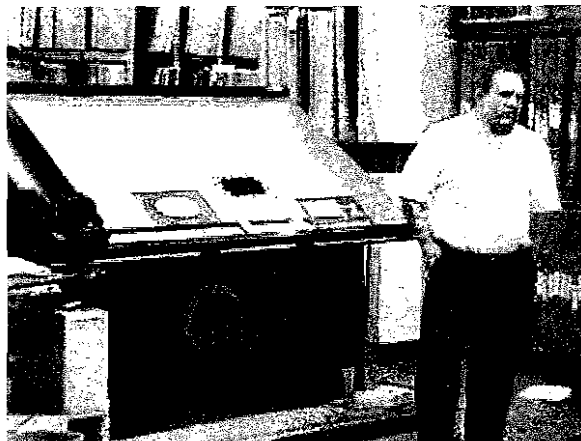
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Scenes from the May meeting at Jayeness Mldg. in Seattle and the computer operated mat cutter comparisons between Wizard and Eclipse mat cutters.



Randall Haupt, Jayeness, and Rob Bridges, Wizard International, comparing Eclipse and Wizard CMC's



Mark Eaton, sales representative for the Eclipse  
"What was the question again?"



Some of our members at the recent meeting  
Take the opportunity to compare two major  
Brands of Computerized Mat Cutters



"The question was....."



Jan Whiting, Eclipse owner from Wenatchee,  
Discussing her machine with Edd Pratt, a  
Representative of Wizard International



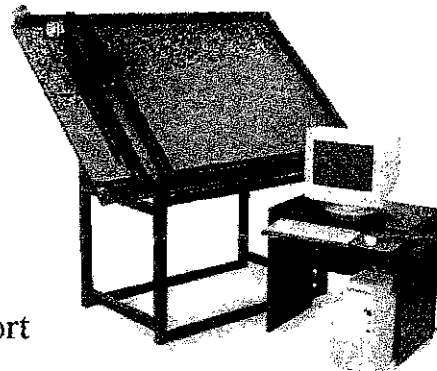
Kirsten Megehan, Rob Bridges, and Edd  
Pratt demonstrating the Wizard CMC

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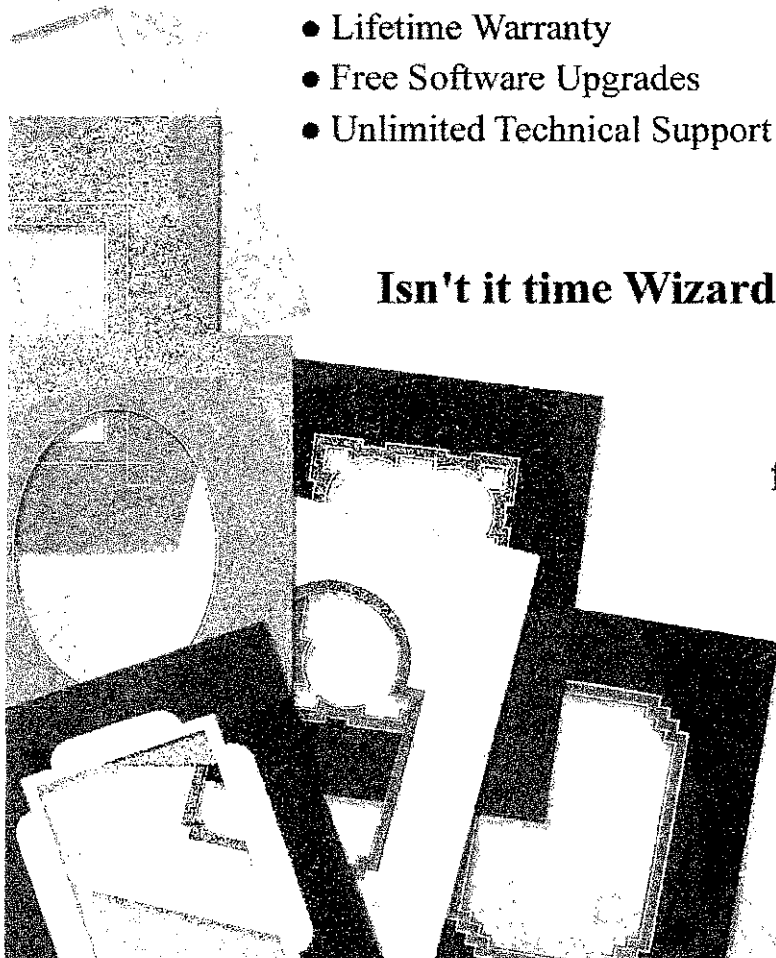
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**A note from the secretary Terry**  
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I recently found out that Jayeness can custom finish it's own line of mouldings. This came in handy when an artist asked if I could match some frames she had purchased a while ago. The line was discontinued, but Jayeness had a profile that was similar and could match the colors of the frames. Our meeting in July is about sharing some special sources that you have discovered for products, services, or information. It would also be a great opportunity for our vendor members to share with us any special products or services that framers may not know are available.



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**Last Page, Last Month:**

The May meeting of the EPFG, hosted by Jayeness, was a great opportunity to see the Eclipse and the Wizard computerized mat cutters side by side. Increasingly, shops are thinking of incorporating a computerized mat cutter, and there are an increasing number of ways in which to do so. Business owners can choose between leasing, buying, lease to own, and programs set up by the mat cutter companies to accommodate the occasional need for a specialty cut mat.

Mark Eaton talked about the Eclipse, explaining that Kaibab began as a precut mat manufacturing company that expanded into the manufacture and sales of computerized mat cutters. Eventually, Eclipse sold the precut mat side of the business to Savage Industries, and focused on the mat cutter line and sales to volume users.

To introduce the Eclipse to the custom framing market, the company has developed a distribution network to make the cutter available to the custom framer throughout the country. The distributors serve as regional sales and service sources, and the company maintains a toll free number for tech support. Jayeness is our local contact.

The Wizard team—Rob Bridges and Ed Pratt—explained that Wizard also began as a manufacturer of precut mats (U.S. Mats). The computerized cutter came into being when Lloyd Everhart and Bill Ridge combined their ideas on computerizing the mat cutting process and “invented” the Super Wizomatic. Eventually, US Mat was sold to Crescent Cardboard, and Wizard positioned itself as a company seeking to lease matcutters to the custom picture framer rather than sell outright. Wizard manufactures, repairs, ships, teaches, and offers tech support from its facility in Mukilteo. There have been some recent moves to offer regional assistance through selected reps in some areas.

Each machine operates somewhat differently, although there are more similarities than dissimilarities. The Eclipse uses a servo motor and the Wizard uses a stepper motor. The Eclipse is quieter due to a different design with the motor and the back board. Because Wizard approached the market with a lease plan, the company designed their cutter to be composed of a group of compartmentalized components that could be removed and replaced. The look of the screen is different, and the software programs differ slightly in how information is to be put in. Both companies offer several models with varying prices and conditions. Both companies offer design service for a fee. Wizard can design complex, specialty mats in CAAD for its clients. Eclipse offers the ability to download the software onto one's own computer, design a mat, send it to the distributor, and have it cut for a fee on the distributor's own machine.

Deciding whether to use a computerized mat cutter, which one to get, and whether to lease or buy, is as individual as each framer is. Decide if you really have a need for one. Do you have the space for one? Can you utilize the cutter enough for it to be profitable for you? Carefully compare the costs of leasing, owning, or sharing a machine.

Be sure to have hands on time with each cutter. Cut a variety of mats in different designs on each machine and compare the cuts. Don't let the sales person do it for you, you must try it out for yourself to make a good comparison. Never believe any sales person who tells you that their machine is so simple that you don't need to have any computer experience to operate it. If you are computer savvy it will be that much easier for you to use the cutter. Try cutting multiple openings and complex designs to see how easy the software is for you to use and the look of the finished mat. Change the blade to see if it is easy or difficult to do. What about other parts that have to be replaced? Compare the maintenance and what has to be done if something breaks down. How long does it take to get replacement parts or service?

Check out the company track record with other picture framers, especially ones who have had the chance to use several machines. Don't rely solely on the references that the company sends to you. Look for long time users and ask them about their experience with the company, what is the cost of the updates, how good is the tech support, is the company improving the machine and the software regularly and staying abreast of changes in the market, does the company live up to its marketing claims?

If they are leasing rather than buying, ask how they came to the decision to do so. If they have purchased a machine, ask what made them buy rather than lease? Find out why they picked the cutter that they did.

Each company would be glad to talk with you about their machines and both have information that can help you decide if you would benefit from acquiring a computerized cutter. Since we are lucky to have several choices available locally, it is much easier to “kick the tires” on the machines here than at trade shows. Even if you are pretty sure that you don't want a computerized mat cutter in your store, visit the companies or framers who have them and become familiar with them. In an industry that is still changing fairly rapidly, you can benefit from having a little knowledge about them even if you don't want one. I personally am waiting for the computerized robot framer who has a built in mat cutter arm attachment that utilizes the glass cutter backboard for cutting both glass, backings, and mats, and features a chop saw arm (with shoulder dust collector) and a v-nailer in its mid section. It also cleans the toilets, empties the trash and does windows. Remember that you saw it here first!

EPFG secretary. Terry Scidmore CPF

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**June 2001**  
12th- William  
Bounds Gallery,  
How to survive  
tough economic  
times

**July 2001**  
10th- Lake City  
Picture Framing,  
Roundtable on  
resources for  
special products

**August 2001**  
19th- Aquasox  
tailgate party 6pm,  
Golf tournament  
date & time tba

**September 2001**  
11th-Frame  
Makers, Tacoma  
Hand carved mats

**October 2001**  
9th- No location  
no topic.

**November**  
2001 13th-  
Millennium  
Gallery, Redmond  
Ask the Vendors  
roundtable.

**December**  
2001  
No meeting  
**HAPPY HOLIDAYS**

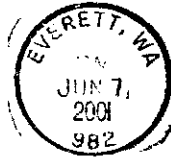
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believe it?

**William Bounds  
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*See page two of this newsletter for address change contact information*

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