

# LAKE CHARLES WOODWORKERS CLUB, INC.

May 1999

## Officers

Brent Evans, President  
Bob Ferguson, Treas. & Newsletter Editor

## Board of Directors

Brent Evans      George Kuffel      John Marcon  
Barry Humphus      John Perry      Dick Hopes

## MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

A presentation of Wood Turning was done at Bob Schmit's Shop in April by Teri and Steve LeGrue.

The LeGrue's brought a Jet JML-1014 Midi-Lathe for the demonstration. This lathe provides a 10" swing over the bed and 14" between centers.. They also brought several turning tools including a set of Glaser HITECs. A special eccentric ball and socket chuck by the French master turner Jean-Francois Escoulen was also demonstrated.

Turning wood provides a level of control found in few other areas of woodworking because the cutting tool is stationary while the wood turns. The keys to good turning is to let the tool ride the bevel of the cutting edge and to thereby cut the wood with a chisel action rather than scraping. Steve recommends using green wood as it cuts well and does not chip out as easily as dried. (He used a piece of found pecan for the demonstration). It is very important to keep the tool moving and cutting to achieve a uniform thickness. The uniform thickness of the piece is important for both immediate and later stability of the wood. Steve recommends starting at a low spindle speed and increasing speed as the piece becomes more uniform.

With bowl turning, Steve recommends cutting from its small diameter to large diameter to minimize end grain cutting. As a finer surface develops, use a shallower cut angle. He also suggests that you focus on the shape of the piece as it is being cut rather than concentrating on the tool.

Because the best wood to turn is green, it is important to immediately cut the inside after the outside is roughed out. As wood is removed, stress sets up in the object and it will easily distort if the thickness is not kept uniform. In other words, the piece is at its most vulnerable before the center is removed.

Steve next demonstrated the Jean-Francois Escoulen Ball and Chuck system. The chuck is built to allow an eccentric mounting of spindle turning and thus provides the turner the ability to produce dramatic and unusual shapes. Because the piece is being eccentrically cut, you must look at the shadow of the turning piece to make the cuts. The system takes some learning of a new technique and a comprehensive training videotape is included with the unit.

With spindle turning, Steve said that you need to move your body rather than wrists to achieve the best control. Like bowl turning, you must use the tool to cut rather than scrape the work to get the best results.

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

### A Tribute to Bob Ferguson

Together with the Board, we say a very special tribute to our long-time treasurer, board member and friend Bob Ferguson. Bob was very dear to all of us and a fine woodworker. His good sense, grace, intelligence, humor and generous time made the Club's operation efficient, smooth and timely. Bob Ferguson will be deeply missed by all who knew and loved him. We ask that you keep his loving and devoted wife Lois Ferguson in your thoughts and prayers.

With the tragic loss of Bob, your Board will need to select a new treasurer in the coming months to serve the remainder of his term. If you have any thoughts or recommendations, please feel free to contact any Board member. We also ask that you all attend our next meeting, and if you have a word or thought about Bob, please express it at the meeting.

Brent Evans  
President

## NEXT MEETING

May 8<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m. in the studio of  
John Marcon, 512 Orchard Dr. LC

Subject: Faux Painting – Gary  
Breaux, South City Paint Company

## FUTURE MEETINGS

Wednesday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> at PPG Pavillion  
Annual Barbeque

July 10<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 a.m.  
Subject: TBA



## ABOUT OUR SPEAKER

Our speaker for May will be **Gary Breaux** from **South City Paint Company** who will tell us about many of the commercially available and widely used finishing materials and techniques for Faux Painting.

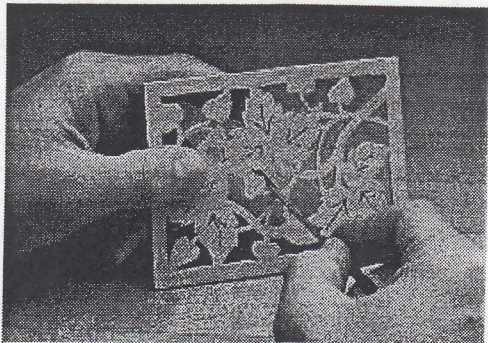
While there is considerable experience within our members, it may individually be limited to one or two systems with which we are comfortable and thus limiting our ability to do better things. As there are so many different products on the market today which enhance our capabilities and ease the work, we need to take a look at them, and Gary Breaux will open our eyes to a variety of paints and techniques, stains, analines, and combinations. This is a popular activity which sometimes includes the whole family, so Spouses are invited.

## TIPS AND TECHNIQUE

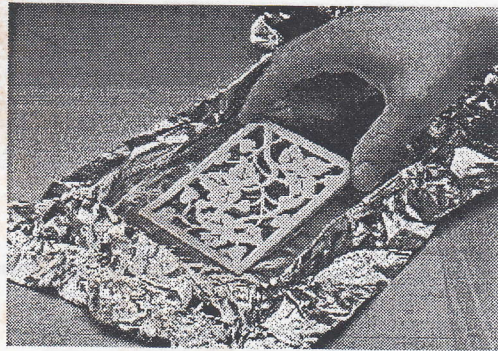
Here are a couple of tricks you can use to put the finishing touches on fretwork panels.

Tiny ridges, kerfs, and burns marks are common problems. Traditionally, small files (riffers) are used for getting into the fretwork openings. But we found that a inexpensive modern diamond file works just as well, in some instances better, see photo below.

As for applying a finish, we get into the tiny openings by dipping the panel in an oil finish, see photo above right. To remove the excess finish, you can blot the panel dry with a cloth or blow it out with compressed air.



For final touch-ups, use a half-round diamond file. It has a round side and a flat side for both curved and flat edges



When dipping a fretwork panel, aluminum foil shaped into a tray acts as a reservoir for the oil finish.

## SHARPENING REVISITED

In March I did a sharpening demonstration at Burl Vincent's shop. I want to expand on this to include a few things I've learned since.

How often have you put off sharpening a chisel because you're in the middle of a big project and you didn't want to take the time? I'll admit I've done that more than once. I usually end up grabbing a sharp tool that's either too wide or too narrow. Then I'm usually sorry I didn't take the time to sharpen the right tool.

But it doesn't have to take a long time. There's no reason you can't have a razor-sharp, long-lasting edge in less time than it takes to read about how to do it. This is a two-step process. This time we'll look at grinding the bevel. Next time, honing the edge on a sharpening stone.

The first step is to grind the bevel. I use an electric bench grinder for this, so I get a hollow ground bevel — the bevel reflects the curve of the grinding wheel. First, it's easier to make a uniform hollow ground bevel. And second, honing is easier because very little metal needs to be removed to hone the edge razor sharp. I recommend using a 60-grit white aluminum oxide wheel for grinding. It cuts fast. And just as important, the binder or "glue" used on a white aluminum oxide wheel allows the particles to break away faster than the particles in a general purpose wheel. This is good for two reasons: The wheel cuts faster because the cutting surface isn't clogged up with bits of cut-off metal. And since it's not clogged up, the chisel doesn't get as hot while grinding. I think heat is one of the biggest problems most people have when sharpening. If a chisel or plane iron starts to turn blue when you're sharpening, it's too hot. There's no quicker way to ruin a tool. John Marcon puts a drop of water at the edge of the tool. When it boils, the tool is getting too hot.

What happens is the tool heats to a temperature that causes it to lose its temper. (Tempering is a heat treatment that makes the metal tougher so it will hold an edge longer.) If the metal



loses its temper, it won't stay sharp. Grinding a bevel is easy. The challenge is grinding a uniform bevel — one that's the same width across the end of the tool. And one with a cutting edge that's 90 degrees to the side of the tool. There are a couple of simple tricks for doing this.

First, adjust the tool rest on the grinder so the chisel (or plane iron) can lie flat on the surface of the rest, not just against the upper or lower edge. This way you have more control. The bevel on most chisels and plane irons is 25 degrees. So set the angle of the tool rest to grind the same bevel on your tool. Next, clamp a small, rectangular block of wood to the blade so the long side of the block butts against the lower edge of the tool rest during sharpening. This provides a positive reference point (a stop) so you can lift the tool off the wheel to inspect the bevel or dip it in water. Then the tool can be returned to precisely the same spot on the wheel. Some chisels are too short to attach a stop block. In that case, you can use a small C-clamp as a stop. But if there's room, use a stop block because it has the added advantage of holding the tool perpendicular to the edge of the tool rest. This makes it easier to grind a bevel that's 90 degree to the side of the tool.

With the tool rest in position and the block clamped to the tool, you're ready to grind the bevel. To do this, turn on the grinder and place the block against the tool rest and move the bevel gently across the wheel. After a couple of light side to side passes, see if the bevel is even, and if the cutting edge is square to the side. Note: If the cutting edge isn't quite square, increase or decrease the angle between the side of the chisel and the top edge of the stop block. Then grind a little more off the bevel until the edge is square to the side. When the angle is right finish grinding the bevel. Next time: Honing the edge.

### **8 QUICK SANDING TIPS**

- 1) Don't sand the wood like you scrub a floor. Use long even strokes. This way, you'll be sanding in a straight line with the grain, not going sideways across the grain.
- 2) Sand glued-up panels and large pieces before cutting them to final size. This keeps the thickness and the edges more consistent.
- 3) Don't sand up to the edge of a board with a power sander unless you want to round the edges slightly. Use a sanding block instead.
- 4) If you're sanding with 150-grit and you find a deep scratch, don't keep sanding at 150. Instead, switch a coarser grit to remove the scratch, and then work back up to 150 and continue.
- 5) If you've stained a project, be careful sanding between coats of finish. And avoid the edges if possible. It's too easy to cut through the finish and remove the stain.

- 6) To get the end grain of a workpiece to accept a stain the same as the face grain, sand it a couple of grits finer.
- 7) If you're using regular sandpaper on a palm sander, load four layers of paper on the sander at one time. Then rip off the top layer when it's worn.
- 8) To sand in tight spaces like corners, use sandpaper wrapped around the end of a dull chisel or putty knife.

### **DRILLING, SANDING & FINISHING PINE**

When I used a brad point drill bit on pine instead of starting the hole cleanly, it took out chunks of wood. I've found it helped to briefly run the drill in reverse first. That way the points on the bit scribe the outside diameter of the hole slicing the wood fibers. Just as the fibers in pine get torn cutting and drilling, you can also tear them out when removing dried glue — especially if you try to scrape it off. So I try not to use too much glue in the joints. And any excess glue is cleaned up just before it dries completely. Removing the excess then prevents tearing the fibers later.

Sanding pine has its own special challenges. Normally I'd use a finish sander to complete a project. But on pine it leaves nearly invisible swirl marks — they don't become visible until you apply a stain. So I finish sand a pine project by hand. It's also a good idea to use a sanding block when sanding pine. That's because pine doesn't sand evenly. It's made up of both soft and hard fibers (early and late wood). When you sand without a block, you remove more of the early wood because it's softer. So you end up with a wavy surface instead of a flat one.

When finishing pine, there are a couple things to keep in mind that will give you a better looking project. First, pine doesn't absorb stain evenly so you get dark blotches on the wood. Try using a wood conditioner or stain controller. You can purchase these at South City Paint. The type of stain controller I used before staining a project was a thinned down oil finish that penetrates all the pores of the wood. So when the stain is applied, it penetrates the pores less deeply, but more evenly. And more even penetration means less blotching. Stain controller is applied like an ordinary coat of oil finish. Wipe it on liberally, let it soak in, then wipe off the excess. The key to avoiding blotches is to begin applying the stain right away, before the stain controller has dried completely. Second, pick lighter colored satins if possible. They don't highlight the missed dents, broken fibers, and sanding swirl marks as much as dark colors.

### **ANNUAL TOY PROGRAM**

Don't forget the Annual Toy Program. Barry Humphus will pass out car and truck templates during the Annual Barbeque in June that you may use to make toys.