

Jeff Cormier, President
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Barry Humphus, Editor, George Kuffel
Gary Rock, Jeff Cormier, Dick Trouth

Mentoring Program - If you have a project, a problem in any woodworking area, these members have volunteered to help. Give them a call. Jeff Cormier: 582-3278; George Kuffel: 478-2707; John Marcon: 478-0646; Chuck Middleton: 625-3134; Gary Rock: 433-1679; Eltee Thibodeaux: 436-1997; Dick Trouth: 583-2683. Each have years of experience and knowledge.

March Meeting Highlights

Pie and Joey Sonnier were our hosts this month and of course Joey's hot biscuits were a real treat.

Jeff Cormier discussed lifting heavy objects. This not only applies to your shop of course, but anything around the house or work. Always get help and if not available, use a carrying jig particularly for large and awkward objects such as a thick plywood or MDF. You only have one spine, so save it from injury.

Jeff also continued his discussion of jigs for the shop. There are multi-use ones as well as project specific jigs. An example of the later is a tapering jig for a table saw used to make table legs. Harbour Freight, for example, sells an aluminum one for less than twenty dollars. But for about three bucks, you can make your own that is much safer to use. I know because I've seen a carbide saw blade tooth make scrap metal out of the aluminum ones. One of the best designs is like Norm Abraham used on The New Yankee Workshop. Just search for tapering jig at woodworking.about.com for one just like Norm's. Jeff has produced an even better one that he will demonstrate at his shop in June.

Show and Tell brought some really nice work to Pie's place this month. Starting off was Steve Thompson's incredible segmented bowl. This one was NASCAR themed with some 494 individual pieces of walnut, maple and



coffee nut.

Ray Kebodeaux brought a spalted magnolia box (as his Bring It Back) and a nicely done step stool of cypress and finished with Easy-Pro. He also showed photos of a saffrass stand. Jeff Cormier also had photos of a pine and spruce cubbard.

Bob Theau had a great beach table and another in walnut table with cabrolie legs with bread board edges and assembled with loose tendon jointery finished with wipe-on poly. He likes loose tenons and described their use.

Don Elfert showed a hanging spice rack made of poplar and luan using an early American stain and poly. He mentioned that it was made up of four pieces - not 494.

Pie's contribution this month was a 1969 Pontiac Grand Pris made of walnut, maple and the usual suspects including a 400 cubic inch engine. It is amazing what you can build out of wood. All those push rods - my God!

Joe Comeaux had photos of a pantry he built for a friend of cabinet grade plywood using Kreg jointery. He also showed off a couple of neat seam rippers from Penn State kits made of cocobolo, oak and redwood. J.W. Anderson also brought a step stool of cypress.

Steve McCorquodale showed a redwood and sinker pine lamp. As a sawyer, he loved the old sawyer saw marks left on the old pine. He said the width of the marks indicated the era of the saw that left them -- sometime in the early 1920's he suggested from the width of the scarf and the saw was five to six feet in diameter.

Ronnie Kramer had a nice serving tray of cypress and sycamore while Bubba Cheramie showed off a fluted hackberry bowl, highly polished inside.

Sandy Kramer scroll sawed some 3-D crosses and stand in pecan, did an Easter bunny and a cypress trivet. Joey Sonnier did a napkin ring holder with hand painted rings in a Mardi Gras theme.

Gary Rock brought us a bucket of flowers he turned complete with a vase to hold them. He has become a master of many things in turning and we are particularly impressed with his creative use of RITZ dyes and an air brush. J.W. won the S&T Stines gift card, Pie won the Bring It Back. Eltee provided some toast tongs won by Steve Thompson and Sandy Kramer. More on the next page.

Comming Up . . . Saturday, April 14 at 9:00 A.M. in the shop of Jack Stegall.

Show and Tell Continues

Mr. Eltee Thibodeaux brought a scrollwork prayer hands work plus a couple of wooden toast tongs he provided for a drawing.

Bubba Cherie told of an amazing use for standard wood glue. Just spread a coat of yellow glue on your rusty machine top, let it dry and peel or scrape it off to leave fresh metal. Then coat the top with a light oil (ATF works well and contains no acids). Of course a commercial product such as Top Coat also works well.

Repairing a Chair

The most common chair repair task is either repairing or replacing a tenon. Replacing is the simplest

but if the chair is old, the stringer carved or finely turned, you may want to look at a repair particularly if an end is missing, chipped or split.

One possible solution, if you still have lots of "meat" on the tenon is to apply wood filler, but you are right not to trust wood filler in this situation. Wood filler lacks the structural strength you need for a strong joint. A tenon's strength is both mechanical and chemical. The mechanical part comes from a good fit between the tenon and the mortise so that the tenon is held firm by the mortise without the benefit of glue. The chemical part comes from the glue itself and for maximum strength, you want as much wood-to-wood contact as possible between the mortise and the tenon where the glue can bond. In both cases, missing pieces of a tenon will weaken the joint. Your goal is to restore the tenon to its original shape.

The best practice is to replace the missing pieces on the tenon with real wood, preferably of the same species, presuming that you can figure out what it may be. For a small split in the tenon, it may be possible to glue and clamp the split back together. For a larger split that can't be squeezed tight without deforming the tenon I take a sharp chisel and widen the split a bit to make a narrow "V". Then glue in a wedge that's slightly thicker and longer than the "V" cut in the

tenon. The wedge should have a snug fit, but you don't want to drive the wedge into the tenon. That might widen the tenon so it no longer fits the mortise. After the glue has dried, pare the wedge flush to the tenon.

If the corner of the tenon is broken or missing, cut off the missing corner at a 45-degree angle. Cut an oversize replacement corner and make sure the grain is running in the same direction as the grain on the tenon. Epoxy this piece onto the corner and trim it flush to the existing tenon.

You can get away with a few small chips on the tenon. For large chips I use a narrow chisel to gouge a ramp or channel in the tenon, then glue in a piece of wood to fit the channel and pare flush.

One more thing: you should use hide glue in your repair. If the chair is an antique, that is the glue that was used when the chair was made. Old hide glue is very reversible and gets re-amalgamated by adding warm water. That's the beauty of hide glue. If you use yellow glue, it will not be able to soak into the wood fibers as they will be sealed by the old hide glue. The resulting repair will not last. *Barry Humphus edited from Woodworkers Guild.*

Ripping It Thin

More than a year ago, I saw some very nice tambour place mats in the Bed, Bath and Beyond store in Lake Charles and really liked the look, however I didn't like the price (\$70 for four). So pulling out my trusty digital camera, I took a quick pic and went home to think about how to make them myself.

A tambour is simply lots of thin strips of wood glued to a medium heavy cloth with a small space between each strip. It is flexible and used for anything from doors to kitchen appliance box covers. Mine were even easier as they did not have to flow through narrow ways but just lie flat on my dining room table.

Ripping thin strips of wood on a table saw can be a hair-raising activity, and doing so without a sound approach can lead to, well, really bad things. The goal in setting up for ripping strips is to ensure safe operations while maintaining efficiency. The challenge is that there is dangerously little space between the saw blade and the fence, which can make it difficult to adequately control the work piece. If not executed flawlessly risks include kickback, or human contact with a spinning blade; both bad scenarios.

Before looking at the various approaches, it is important to address blade height. In general, the height of a blade above the work piece is a highly debated topic, but

Continues on Page 3



Continues from Page 2

whatever your preferences for most table saw operations, I encourage you to keep it low when you are ripping thin strips. In the event that something goes wrong when your hand is that close to the blade, you want as little spinning carbide exposed as possible. The ideal setup positions the bottom of the saw tooth gullet just proud of the material being cut, allowing proper cooling of the blade and clearing of sawdust, while minimizing blade exposure during the cut.

Pushsticks might be considered the “old faithful” approach, and it works well in a number of scenarios. There are numerous different designs for push sticks, and it is important to note the differences and choose one that makes you the most confident and comfortable while using them.

Trailers. Some push sticks are designed to trail completely behind the board as it runs through the saw. The advantage here is that your fingers are nowhere near the blade as it is cutting the material, which reduces the risk of a blade contact injury.

What concerns me about most push stick designs, however, is the lack of control that you have over the board in terms of holding it down against the table as it passes the blade. If the board binds even slightly between the blade and fence, you are in a poor position to mitigate a potential kickback. Given this general feeling of marginal control, I give a thumbs-down to this design.

Push shoe. Another push stick design features the look of a shoe, with the heel of the shoe pulling the board through the cut. This type of push stick positions your hand above the board that is being cut, applying downward pressure to hold it steady in the event of minor binding. The toe of the shoe also extends several inches out onto the board, applying greater leverage and pressure closer to the back of the blade which is where kickback begins. I like this design a lot. One downside to any push stick design, however, is that you will need to remove your blade guard when ripping thin strips. I know that some woodworkers shun the use of blade guards, but I prefer to use one whenever possible (just want to keep those finger tips for some reason).

Using a push shoe is as simple as it seems. Hold the work piece to the fence behind the blade as you normally would, and push the board through the blade with steady pressure. Follow through past the blade, or for rips that are more narrow than the width of your push stick, the bottom of push stick will pass right through the spinning blade.

Rockler’s Thin Rip Table Saw Jig (about \$18) cleverly places the thin strip to the left of the saw blade, so that it

won’t bind between the fence and blade. Depending upon the overall size of the board you are ripping, this may allow you to perform the operation with your blade guard in place which is a huge advantage.

Zero the Rockler jig out by sliding it to your blade, then back it off from the blade the same distance as the width of strip you would like to rip. There is a measure scale on the jig itself, but I found it difficult to read so used a tape measure. The downside to using this jig is that if you are cutting multiple rips of the same width, you will need to adjust the fence each time. Depending upon the level of precision required for your rip, this may be problematic, and even if that is not a factor, this is a hassle if you are doing any volume of thin rips. This jig is well made and easy to use, however, so I give it a thumbs up for being relatively easy to set up and of course safe to use (and I get to keep my thumb).

You could also build a project specific jig to do this job and that will be your least cost method.

Another method is to square one edge of the board from which you will rip the strips and use the squared edge as the guide against your table saw fence, ripping on the far left (depending on the board width). However, as you cut down the board and the point of cut get closer to the blade, you are going to waste some material as it is too dangerous to get really close to the blade without one or more of the above jigs or tools. I’ve used this method and just used the scrap in my meat smoker!

The most important thing in ripping thin strips is to have a plan in place before the need arises so that you are not tempted to try something quick but dangerous when facing this situation. Find the right approach for you, get comfortable with it, and use it with confidence. All of these approaches are proven, and have various strengths and weaknesses that might make any of them your best option. Note that you **MUST** use a zero insert on your table saw to do any of this work. They are easy to make from a number of materials and I highly recommend that everyone purchase or make and use these.

By the way, the tambour place mats turned out well. I assembled them using TiteBond II and stained everything using a very dark walnut stain (RITZ dye) then applied two coats of satin poly to all surfaces. Another issue with tambour is that you will likely have to bevel the top edges of each strip so that they will roll up and be flexible. I used what is known as a bevel plane. *Barry Humphus.*

Happy Easter to everyone!