All the News that fits

Lake Charles Woodworkers Club, Inc. February 2015

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

January Meeting Highlights

Steve Thomas' shop was our meeting place this month and a fine shop it is.We'll also meet there in February.

Steve started things off buy mentioning air compressor safety and air compressors in general. If you search on Google for air compressor safety, one of the first hits is a YouTube video showing the explosion of a home compressor. If you see this, pay attention to the narration. The bottom line is that if the unit looks old, don't use it. Steel compressor tanks rust from the inside out even though you drain them of water frequently. Much more in the article that follows.

Steve also mentioned that if you have not paid your annual dues, you will not be receiving the monthly newsletter

so please give the $20 to Joe Comeaux at the February meeting.

Steve noted that 2015 is our 25th year of the club and that we should possibly celebrate this with a commemorative T-shirt. Barry will send the club logo to Steve for this.

Our first presentation was Steve Thomas showing how he takes photographs of his work using a light tent. There are different sizes available and Steve had a Square Perfect unit that cost about $45 with shipping. Both lower and higher (larger) cost models are available from several sources and you can construct your own as well with a white bed sheet and scrap plus a few lights. The idea is to have a table top studio to photograph your fine work for display or sale.

For Show and Tell, Mr. Thibodeauz started off by showing his lastest fine work with his new CnC machine followed by Steve Thomas with a sweet gum segmennted bowl with black walnuts inserted. It is difficult to invision this without the photo. Steve also had a sycamore segmented bowl of wonderful design.

Ray Kibodeaux also brought a segmented bowl of ash and walnut with an American Indian design. He said that he made two of them by re-sawing the bilet he constructed.

John (I believe Shipman) did a Florida gator image in wood and described how he put this together. John also showed images of a great cabinet he did from a recycled table and very nice work

Mr. Gary Rock also had some nice work including a bowl of hickory that was both carved and painted plus another nice bowl. Gary picked up a bilet or two from Barry's collection the came from Steve Hedledski. Please let Barry know if you want others as he has several more interesting logs that you may want. Give Barry a call at 477-8474 should you be interested in getting some interesting logs for turning or other projects.

Coming up . . . Next meeting is at the shop of Steve Thomas beginning at 9:00 A.M. on Saturday, February 14, 2015. See the map at the end of the Newsletter.

Air Compressors and Their Safety

Steve Thomas introduced us to the consideration of air compressors and showed a very nice one that was quiet (compared to the one I have) as well as small but powerful enough to do many jobs. The one that Steve had was only 35lbs, oiless and available from Amazon.com. It comes with an aluminum tank and thus is rust free. California Air is U.S made and they have many models from the small unit Steve bought to much larger and more powerful units.

Steve's first suggestion is that you should not blow off your clothing with an air compressor as this could be a dangerous issue. But see below.

One of today's most versatile tools operates based on the very simple principle: of squeezing a volume of air into a smaller space to dramatically increases the pressure. Air compressors produce highly pressurized air that can be used to operate everything from paint guns to impact wrenches and much more. Pressurized air is remarkably powerful, and when used correctly, is very safe.

The key to ensuring safe operation of air compressors is making sure that you have been properly trained and familiar with the particular model that is being used. It's important to read the operating manual and follow the proper steps for operation. As with all power tools, read the directions of use. In the computer business that I am in, we say RTFM. I'm certain that you can figure this out. This old addage will serve you well with any tool.

Before using the compressor, verify that it is in good working order and has been properly lubricated. If necessary, check the oil level. Most modern consumer unit are oilless so you may not need to do this. If you need to add oil, be careful to avoid overfilling, or spilling oil on the compressor itself.

Verify that the air filter (if it has one) is clean, and that the air entering the compressor is fresh. If the filter appears to be dirty, replace it. Make sure that any moving parts have been guarded so that you can't come into contact with them inadvertently.

Because some compressed air tools can generate static electricity, be sure that the compressor is properly grounded before using it where any kind of flammable or explosive vapors may be present.

When using an electric compressor as most of us use, plug the unit into a grounded power outlet. If you have to use an extension cord, verify that your cord is not longer than what the manual recommends, because a too-long cord can cause a voltage drop that may damage the compressor.

An air compressor, the tools it powers, and the pipes, hoses, and fittings that connect the two make up a system.

It's important to verify that every element of the system has the capability to safely handle your needs. Check everything that will be attached to the compressor to ensure that it is rated at least for the compressor's maximum pressure. It's even better if the ratings exceed the compressor's pressure. Make sure that you don't use more pressure than required for the tool and the task.

The shutoff values for the air supply should be located close to where the work will be taking place, so that the airflow can be interrupted immediately if necessary. Any air receiver tanks should have the correct safety valves (set below the tank's maximum pressure) and pressure gauges.

The pipes and hoses that carry the air should be in good condition, free from oil, grease, and dirt. If possible, hoses should be suspended from above the work area to reduce the possibility of someone tripping over them, or of the hoses becoming kinked during operation.

Before you remove a tool that doesn't have a quick disconnect fitting, shut off the air supply at the control value and bleed the remaining pressure from the tool. If you're finished with the compressor, shut off and unplug it if it's electrically powered. After closing the regulator valve, release any remaining compressed air from the tank. Finally, to avoid damage from condensation, open the drain valve, and leave it open until the compressor is used again.

Most compressor-related injuries or damage result from improper use, or from the failure to wear the appropriate personal protective equipment for the task. Horseplay with compressors, such as pointing the air stream or an impact tool at a co-worker, is especially dangerous. Nor should you use compressed air to clean yourself off.

Most of all, make sure that your compressors and every element of your systems that use compressed air receive regular inspections and are kept clean and well-maintained. While those steps may not eliminate the possibility of accidents, they will minimize incidents caused by mechanical problems.

Recall that most consumer air compressers have a steel tank. The day you first use it, it becomes contaminated with water. There is no way around this issue unless the tank(s) are made of aluminum. Drain the tank frequently particularly if the unit is often used. Steel tanks rust from the inside out and you will never know when that steel is too thin to hold the compressed air until it blows up.

Dues and more

If you have not paid your annual dues for the Woodworkers Club, now is the time to do so. See Mr. Joe Comeaux with just $20 for a family membership at the next meeting.

Your Valentine Woods

The very day we meet next is Valentine's Day and I though I would tell you about the woods you could consider. So if you want to add a splash of color to a project, here are a few of the woods you want to consider and then check out these four red-hot exotics. Though pricey, they are available, at least in small sizes, from dealers in exotic hardwoods, as well as from catalogs. Consider using them for unique small projects or as accents on larger ones.

Redheart (Erythroxylon spp.) This Central American hardwood boasts a bright-red color when freshly cut that darkens to deep red over time. The wood features tight, straight grain, making it suitable for turning. It also machines well using carbide-tipped tools, but has a tendency to burn. This wood isn't the easiest to find, and usually sells as turning blanks or in sizes less than 1 board foot. Cost, in spite of the wood's relative scarcity, runs about $10 per board foot.

Chakte kok (Sickingia salvadorensis) This is also often referred to as redheart, this more-widely-available wood hails from Central America as well. Its color ranges from pinkish to bright red, with streaks of purple and brown. Maintaining the wood's vivid colors requires a finish that protects against ultraviolet light, or the wood will fade to a golden tan. Common uses for chakte kok include turning, marquetry, and inlay. Again, expect to pay $10 or more per board foot.

Bloodwood (Brosimum paraense) This is a hard, heavy wood and goes by several other names, including cardinalwood and satine. Many describe its color as strawberry red, with streaks of gold. Over time, it darkens to reddish brown. Growing in Central and South America, you may find it difficult to buy, though 1-2' pieces known as "shorts" are available. Expect to pay about $12-$15 per board foot. Bloodwood demands sharp tools and light passes, but yields high luster.

Padauk (Pterocarpus soyauxii) The most common among the crimson collection, African padauk comes in 4/4 and 8/4 thicknesses, lengths up to 8', and sells for $7-$9 per board foot. It starts out red orange, and darkens to brown over time.

But there is More

If you've been working with wood for very long, you realize that each species has different characteristics and appeal. You probably know, too, that even a pair of boards taken from two logs of the same species may not look exactly alike. That's because color, luster, texture, grain, and figure all come into play for a species' visual appeal. And it's one or more of these characteristics that put a high value on the most favored hardwoods used for decorative purposes. Now you'll learn just what they are.

In hardwoods, color occurs naturally across a wide range. There are purples, yellows, oranges, almond tones, browns, cinnamons, and shades of red. And color plays a major role in determining the final use of the wood. East Indian rosewood's decorative color makes an attractive turned bowl. But a nearly colorless wood, such as birch, makes a good mixing spoon.

Wood has color due to infiltrates that interact with the cellulose of its cell walls and the lignin that bonds them together. These infiltrates are soluble materials (sometimes called extractives) that a tree draws from the soil where it grows. Various species react to the infiltrates in different ways, thus creating contrasts among them. But that's also why even within a species the wood's color can vary. Walnut harvested from the cool limestone bluffs of northeast Iowa, for instance, will differ in color from that grown in central Kansas.

Freshly sawn green wood from a tree also can change color when exposed to air and light, sometimes drastically. South American purpleheart turns from light brown to purple. Osage-orange is a bright yellow-orange when first cut or planed, but shortly turns brown. Some woods, such as teak, fade under strong light but darken by moderate light. The moist heat of kiln drying will change a wood's color, too. As an example, the lighter color of walnut's sapwood evens out in a kiln to match the darker heartwood.

A wood that has luster reflects light from its cell walls and appears to have a natural sheen. But any infiltrates in a wood's cell walls that give it color reduce its luster. Because of this, light-colored hardwoods will have luster, as does the light sapwood of darker hardwoods. Lack of luster, however, does not mean that a wood won't take a high polish when finely sanded, then buffed. Finishing also adds luster.

In general, quartersawn wood has more luster than flatsawn, as with white oak. The ray flecks in white oak exposed by this manner of cutting reflect light. Too, woods with lots of figure, such as curly and fiddleback maple, display added luster due to the cell walls' changing angle to the light.

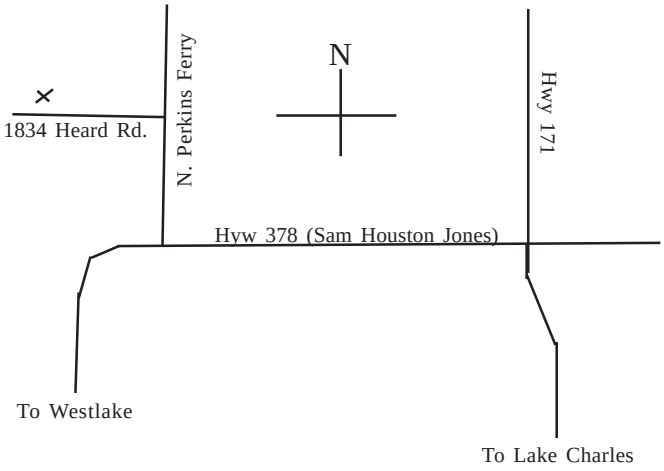
When wood is said to be "coarse" grained or "fine" grained, it's a reference to its texture. A wood's texture depends on the relative size and variation of size in its cells and the width and abundance of its rays. You actually can feel the difference between fine-textured wood with small cells and thin rays and coarse-textured wood with wide vessels and broad rays. Red oak, for example, rates as coarse-textured, while hard maple is fine-textured. Walnut, however, is moderately coarse-textured, while holly is very fine-textured.

The February Meeting of LCWW

Steve Thomas has graciously provided his shop for our meeting this month so please come to Moss Bluff.

Steve provides the following directions: “To get to my place take North Perkins Ferry Rd. off route 378 in Moss Bluff. Follow North Perkins Ferry about 1 mile and turn left on to Heard Road. My house is on the right side of the street. If it's not too wet, members should be able to park behind my shop.”

The address is 1834 Heard Rd., Lake Charles, La 70611 in Moss Bluff. If you need further directions, please give him a call at 337-302-8296.



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