

Jeff Cormier, President  
Joe Comeaux, Treasurer

Officers and Directors

Barry Humphus, Editor, Bubba Cherie  
George Kuffel, John Marcon, Chuck Middleton

**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 Truth: 583-2683. Each has years of experience and knowledge.

### February Meeting Highlights

Gary Rock was our host this month and there was quite a crowd.

A couple of members have spoken to Dick Hopes and it was reported that he has been doing better of late. We of course wish June and Dick the best. Jeff Cormier mentioned that the wooden toys Dick made last Fall were donated to M.D. Anderson Hospital in Houston for children who stay there.

**Party.** Jeff Corneir reminded everyone that the BBQ that was delayed because of Hurricane Ike will take place on Tuesday, March 12 at 5:30 p.m. at the PPG Family Center (Porter Hall) in Westlake. If you are going and haven't paid or haven't told Jeff, Joe or Barry that you want to go, please call on one of them - Jeff at 582-3278, Joe at 855-6361 or Barry at 477-8474. Make sure to bring any Show and Tell you have. Also, this is the meeting where you can bring all of the magazines you have accumulated over the past year and give them away or trade them. Bring old ones or new ones, whatever you want.

Dick Truth started out by discussing the Festool Dowling Jointer product, the Festool DF 500 Domino Biscuit / Dowel Jointer for about \$330 from various sources. It is almost a biscuit joiner and seems to do the job should you need it.

It was announced that the annual Woodworking Shows will be in Katy, Texas this year at the Leonard Merrell Center. It is at 6301 South Stadium Lane, Katy, TX 77494 and unlike Reliant Stadium, the parking is free. The event starts on Friday, April 3rd (12 noon to 6:00 p.m.) and runs through Sunday, April 5th until 4:00 p.m. They probably have less expensive food there as well.

Jeff Cormier, in his safety talk reminded us about band saws and promised that the next time our meeting is at his shop, he'll show us the ropes. Two of the keys to safe bandsaw user: come up to full speed before you cut and when you are finished, come to a full stop when finished.

Steve McCorquodale reported that he had participated in a study by the U.S. Forestry Service on accidents. They found that most Forest Service accidents occurred early in the morning and often on Mondays.

Show and Tell brought lots of great items this month. Jeff Cormier showed an unfinished side table. Made with leftover red oak scraps, it featured a solid top and tapered legs. The legs were tapered on a table saw and Dick Truth mentioned his demonstration of tapering on a jointer. While someone mentioned that Acadian Hardwood in Rose City, Texas, has very good prices on oak.

Mr. Thibodeaux brought a neat little box with a checkered look that he did - very nice scrollwork box. Joe Comeaux brought some of great small turnings including pecan kaleidoscopes, wine bottle stoppers and golf tees. The golf tees are so nice, you might not want to use and consequently lose them on a course.

Bob Theaux showed us a red oak ice box replica while Gary Rock showed us a turned platter made of spruce along with a small bowl made of ash and dyed with Ritz. He also had a very nice sweet gum bowl.

Bill Fey has done a conversion of the drawers that fit an old Singer sewing machine case. Bill basically constructed a frame to hold the antique drawers.

Pie Sonnier showed off a car that I always wanted - a 1966 Mustang hardtop. Dick Truth showed off a digital protractor available from many online sources. Jim Couvillion brought us some Woodworkers Hardware catalogs along with a price list from Casey's Wood products.

Mitch Frazier showed photos of his latest project - a pencil post bed frame that he built from a WoodSmith plan. He said that the difficulty was doing the parts accurately enough to fit together. Several members made suggestions and recommended possible solutions.

Bill Fey won the drawing while Joe "Lucky" Comeaux won the raffle - Jeff Cormier's neat little side table. In fact, if Jeff would build another, I gladly buy it.

### Coming Up . . .

Thursday, March 12 at 5:30 p.m. - Porter Hall, PPG Family Center, Westlake - Annual LCWW BBQ. Delayed from October of last year due to Hurricane Ike, we present you with great food, catered by Hollier's of Sulphur plus book and magazine exchange and of course Show and Tell. Lots of Door Prizes. Only \$10 per person.

## Buying Used Woodworking Tools

Buying used woodworking tools is a great way to stretch your wood shop setup budget. Used woodworking equipment can still have many years of useful life, and can be found at auctions, garage sales, in newspaper classified ads or even online. Here are a few tips for choosing power tools that are gently used, not past their prime.

Always look over the tools before buying them, unless the price is so small that you can afford to be on the losing end of the bargain. Used tools can sometimes fetch high prices that don't really match the useful life left in the equipment, and sometimes the owner is more focused on recouping the cost than selling the tool for what it's currently worth. Looking at the used tools in person will help you evaluate whether the price matches the condition of the equipment.

A little prior research goes a long way when buying used woodworking tools. If you're looking for a used table saw, find out what new table saws cost. Check online to see if the tools you want tend to depreciate quickly or hold their value. Sometimes you'll find that it's a better deal to just buy a new tool. Also learn about the common sizes available, particularly on saws. Finding a great deal on an 8-inch miter saw won't help if you really need a 10-inch miter saw.

At first glance, you should be able to tell whether a used woodworking tool has been taken care of properly. Is the machine rusted or overly grimy? A little bit of wear from years of use is normal, but if the body or moving parts are very rusty, that can be a signal of an improperly maintained machine.

Turn any moving parts to see what happens. Do they move freely as they are supposed to? Overly tight moving parts may mean that you'll have to replace bearings or other parts, which increases the total cost of the equipment. Check to see that adjustable parts move easily but lock tight. A table saw with a loose fence won't give you accurate cuts. Make note of any broken parts and adjust your price accordingly.

Open up the housing of power tools if possible and check for buildup of grit, grime or old lubricants. Be sure the machine's interior has been well-maintained, too. Buildup makes the motor work harder and increases wear, which decreases the life of the equipment.

If you're looking at used saws or other cutting tools, check the blades for cracking, warping, nicking or other signs of overly heavy use. A worn blade is to be expected on older saws, but you will want to replace saw blades if they are damaged, to protect yourself and the saw. *Barry Humphus*

## Selecting Wood Finishes

When selecting a wood finish it's easy to become overwhelmed with all of the slick labels and marketing hype. A trip to the local home project center will reveal hundreds of choices. The term finish is often used loosely to refer to any chemical that is applied to wood. The term actually refers to a (mostly) clear protective coating that sits on or in the surface of the wood.

Stain, Paint, and Finish are the three primary classifications for common wood treatments. Stains contain pigments and are used to tint the wood. Paints contain colored pigments and sit on the wood to form a protective coating. Some finishes are simply paint without the pigment that lay down a clear protective coating. There are five common types of finishes on the market. They are: Oil, Varnish and Polyurethane, Shellac, Lacquer and Water-based Finishes. Applying finishes is one part of woodworking that doesn't require many tools. In fact there are only three main tools used to apply all finishes: rags, brushes, and a spray gun..

When you are selecting a clear finish it is important to remember the qualities you require from the finish: a) It must protect the wood; b) It must be durable enough for the intended application; and c) It should be as easy to apply as possible.

To protect your project for the long term you need a finish that has a maximum resistance to moisture vapor exchange. Thicker finishes tend to slow down this exchange more. Keep in mind though that thicker might not always be better. Polyurethane is more prone to cracking after 4 or 5 coats.

The durability of finish is an important part of protecting the wood beneath. A durable finish is more important for a tabletop than a mantle or picture frame. Durability has more to do with the chemistry of the finish than the number of coats. For example a single coat of polyurethane is more durable than multiple coats of a water-based finish. So consider water-based under oil-based poly for maximum durability.

Ease of applications is one of the key factors to achieving a professional finish. Slow drying finishes like polyurethane and varnish are relatively easy to apply with a brush. However, their slow dry time leaves them vulnerable to dust landing on the surface and leaving spots. Faster drying finishes can be difficult or impossible to apply without a spray gun. Oil finishes aren't affected by dust since they soak into the wood.

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There are five primary types of finishes, a bunch of sub-categories, and a limitless number of brand names for these finishes.

Oil Finishes have been used for centuries to treat and preserve wood. Oils are different from most other finishes on the market because they seep into the wood and penetrate the wood's fibers. Because of this, oil finishes cannot be built up to a thick coat. They offer less protection but are also easier to apply which is their primary advantage. Another advantage is that simply wiping on more oil can often repair minor scratches.

There are two types of oils, those that cure and those that don't. Oils that don't cure should generally be avoided because that can continue to seep into the wood leaving the surface unprotected. They can also leave a sticky surface on the wood. Boiled Linseed oil and Tung Oil are both oils that cure and work well as finishes.

Linseed oil is made from the seeds of the flax plant. Look for "Boiled" linseed oil. This product has an added metallic drying agent (basically Japan Dryer) that helps the finish dry in a day. Linseed oil without this additive can take over a week to dry.

Pure Tung oil is pressed from the nuts of the Tung tree. Unlike Linseed Oil, this finish does not require drying additives and cures in several days.

The primary advantage of using these finishes is their ease of application. Simply wipe it onto the surface with a clean cotton rag, wait 10 minutes, and applying more oil and allow time to cure. You should always sand lightly between coats. Linseed Oil generally requires three coats to achieve the "hand rubbed" look. Tung Oil may require 5-6 coats to achieve the same results. The first few coats will tend to cure rough but will even out during the last few coats.

Varnishes are produced by cooking oil and mixing it with a resin such as synthetic alkyds, phenolics, and polyurethanes. Interestingly, polyurethane finish is actually varnish made with polyurethane resin to make the finish more protective and durable.

When more oil is used than resin the finish becomes more flexible. This type of varnish is called "Spar Varnish" and is ideal for outdoor use because the flexibility makes it more forgiving of seasonal wood movement.

Achieving a perfect varnish finish is a combination of skill and experiences as well as access to the right tools for the job. Work in a clean dust-free environment if at all possible. The room should be prepared by wiping it down surfaces with a damp cloth. Also be aware of dust that can be generated by human skin and clothing. The wood should be

wiped with a tack cloth and the finish transferred into a separate working container.

Varnish is usually applied with a brush using long steady brush strokes. In contrast to paint varnish brush strokes are much more apparent. Work in the direction of the grain and "tip-off" your brush strokes with lightly brushed vertical strokes. Varnish should be wet sanded between coats with fine sandpaper.

"Wiping Varnish" that has been thinned with Paint Thinner (mineral spirits) is also available. Use caution since some manufacturers refer to their wiping varnish as "Tung Oil" or "Danish Oil". Read the labels carefully since these products are completely different. One way to test this product is to pour some of the finish onto a piece of glass and allow it to dry. If the finish cures to a hard finish it's varnish. This product can be applied with a brush like varnish or with a cotton rag like an oil finish. The advantage of wiping varnish over an oil finish is that you can leave some of the finish on the surface and build up to a thicker coat.

Shellac is one of the few universal natural resins still in use today. Although not as durable as a Lacquer or Varnish, shellac still provides a modest amount of protection. Shellac is not the best finish for tabletops, chairs, and kitchen cabinets due to high wear requirements of these items. But, you can coat any finish over it and still get positive results. Shellac is the 'golden finish' in that it will work with almost any other finish and is food safe.

The big advantage, and the reason the finish is still in use today, is that shellac is alcohol based which makes it very fast drying. Because shellac is fast drying it is less likely to collect dust like varnish. It is often too thick to apply with a brush and requires thinning with denatured alcohol before it can be brushed. This finish also requires that you work fast with your brush and maintain a wet edge.

Lacquer is used most often in furniture factories because its fast drying properties reduce dust related finish problems. It is usually applied with a spray gun although "brushing lacquers" that cure slowly are also available. If you choose to spray a lacquer finish be aware that the fumes are hazardous to your health and the dry dust can be explosive.

Because of increasing environmental concerns a new class of finished has been developed. These "Water-Based" finishes are often marketed as "polyurethane", "varnish", or "lacquer" which is untrue since all of these finishes are solvent-based. You can tell if a finish is water based because the can should mention "water cleanup" as an added feature. "Water-based" finishes are basically latex paint without a pigment. moisture ranges that exceed indoor conditions. Moisture or temperature ranges on either end of the scale can cause drying problems. *From Woodzone, edited by Barry Humphus*