All the News that fits

Lake Charles Woodworkers Club, Inc. September 2016

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.

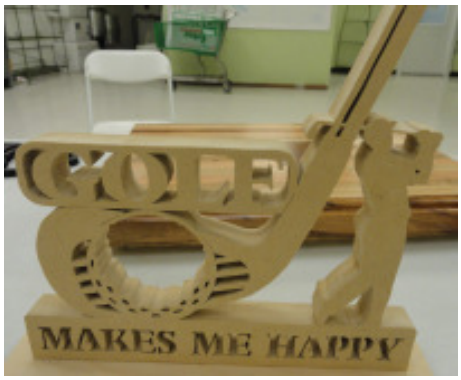
August Meeting Highlights

As usual, our meeting at the Stine's location in Lake Charles was very good. We had a couple of guests this month including Steve Gray (who joined) and Stephen St. Michael. We also got an update on Dick Trout (who has some mobility issues) as well as Jeff Cormier's son.

John Griffith started us out discussing his experiences as a luthier during his build of his first guitar. He used a jewlers bit in a router to create the binding rabbets on the body.

John also showed off a neat marking gage that he purchased through eBay. As John once worked for the U.S. Patent Office, he was curious about the patent date on the old marker. At first he thought the patent was issued in 1972 but discovered that the piece was issued in 1872. So his cheap marker was actually some 144 years old. John said he has had to create lots of jigs for this project that he will use on future guitars.

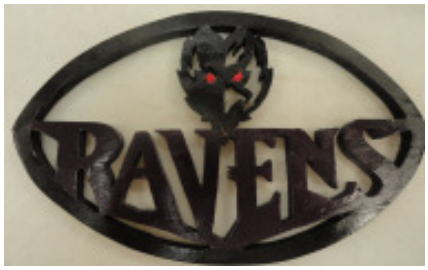
Mr. Eltee Thibodeaux started the Show and Tell this month with a golfing motife palck made of MDF. Ray Kebodeaux did a very nice osage large sallow bowl with a pecan insert finsished with tung oil and wax.



Pie Sonneir built a 1928 Caddie V16 automobile made of walnut, maple and beech from a model. He also mentioned that the best cleaning product for air bushes is standard carberater cleaner available at many locations.

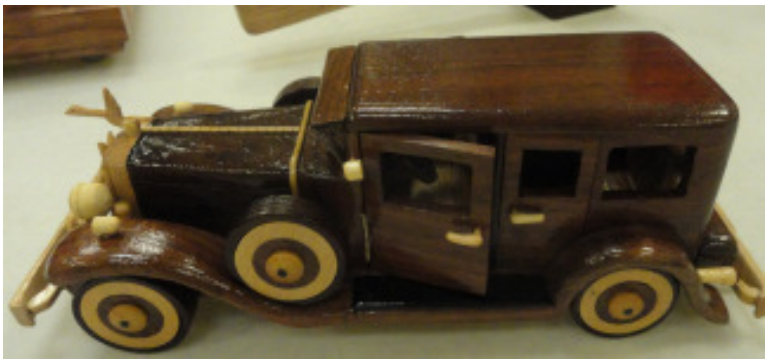
Steve Thomas had a cool tiger wood, oak and lignum wood box with a juniper lining that had a relief carved top that was finished with analine dye with an air brush. Steve had also produced some 'acorn' boxes with screw tops of cherry, oak and walnut. Steve used a Ron Brown Chasing tool to do the threads.

Patrick LaPoint did a nice picture frame with a baseball motif of his plentaful 'Port' wood. Brad Livine had a great cutting board of red oak and butter pecan and a Ravens football design.



New member Steve Gray had a very nice mallet of walnut and epay with a handle of oak from flooring laminated. Gary Rock brought us a lovely elm bowls embedded with Mexican coins under a poly resin. Gary also had a great cypress bowl/globlet design as well. He just continues to create wonderful objects at his shop. Poly resin is available at Michaels and Hobby Lobby should you need this.

Pie Sonnier won the Show & Tell gift card from Stines. Speaking of Stines, they do a tax free weekend from time to time and you should each take advantage of this program as you will save some 10% in sales tax throughtout their store no matter how small your purchase. They always advertise this in the LC American Press so look for their ads for tax free days that they do.



Comming Up . . . Saturday, September 10 at 9:00 A.M at the Stines store on Nelson Road in Lake Charles meeting room for coffee, donuts and a great meeting with your collegeaues. Please join us each month.

Treated Lumber

It has been several years since the EPA announced the phase-out of chromated-copper-arsenate (CNA) treated lumber. You need to know what this is about when doing any wood-working with this product.

Alkaline copper quaternary (ACQ) and copper azole (CA) accepted CCA's abdication of the outdoor-lumber throne with a fairly smooth transfer of power. Both treatments provide similar, high levels of preservative power with arsenic-free chemicals.

In order to achieve the preservative power of CCA, ACQ and CA ramp up the amount of copper used. But because copper speeds corrosion in ferrous metals, steel fasteners must be chosen with care. (See photos.)

The newest products on the marketis micronized copper quat (often marked MCQ) substitutes dissolved copper with a finely ground copper particulate. While it doesn't yet have the long, proven track record of ACQ and CA, proponents claim MCQ achieves the same level of wood preservation and rot-resistance with a lowered level of fastener corrosion.

The new types of PT lumber still start out as stacks of Southern yellow pine placed into large, sealed vats where air is evacuated and the preservative chemicals are introduced. The low pressure draws the chemicals into the sapwood. Because there is little chance for it to dry between its chemical bath and the time it hits the home-center shelves, PT lumber can have a moisture content percentage into the low-to-mid 20s. (Compare to kiln-dried hardwoods that average 6-8 percent.) Once left in your shop or a sunny spot, the drying and the warping begins.

The best approach to counter this: Let the wood acclimate outdoors in the shade for several weeks; then fasten it firmly in place with screws. One common mistake for beginning deck-builders is to leave a gap for drainage between the decking boards. This strategy isn't necessary for PT lumber; the shrinkage during drying will provide all the gap necessary.

There's no need to run out and demolish that weathered pressure-treated (PT) deck for fear of arsenic leaching from older CCA-treated lumber. The majority of the leaching seems to happen in the first year.

But if it's time to replace the deck anyway, do take some precautions as you're working with both old and new PT lumber.

Clean up and dispose of all debris through your municipality's trash collection. Never burn PT lumber: The smoke and ashes can contain toxic chemicals.

Along with gloves and safety glasses, wear a dust mask when working with pressure-treated lumber to avoid inhalation of dust.

Wash your hands or any exposed skin thoroughly after working with PT lumber. You need to wash the clothing you were wearing as well.

PT lumbers' transformation to a weathered gray color is almost as inevitable as the sun and rain, primarily because it is caused by the sun and rain. Because there's no perfect finishing solution, you must choose either a durable finish that hides the wood grain or a lightweight finish that requires frequent reapplication.

Any outdoor finish heavy on pigments, such as paint or solid-color stains, provides the best protection against damaging UV light. Without those sun-screening pigments, clear, film-forming finishes, such as varnish and polyurethane, quickly slough off as the wood's surface degrades. Skip these clear or low-pigment finishes unless you enjoy refinishing every 6-12 months after a thorough sanding.

For a good compromise between the two, choose a penetrating-oil finish with finely ground, UV-inhibiting pigments, such as Penofin 550 (Performance Coatings, Ready Seal or Total Wood Preservative. The near-microscopic trans-oxide pigments effectively block most UV rays. You'll have to re-coat about every two years, but because you don't have to remove the previous finish, application is easy compared to other options.

Oil and Varnish Blends

An oil-varnish blend, often referred to as Danish oil or antique oil finish, offers an effective means of hiding minor surface flaws and restoring sheen to dull finishes. And it's an easy fix, too: Just clean the surface (a spray-on household cleaner works fine), rub the finish on as shown in the photo, and then wipe off the excess. Rubbing off all the excess is the key to avoiding a smeary, sticky surface.

Be careful with rags you use with oil-varnish; there's a danger of fire from spontaneous combustion. Spread the rags and hang them to dry evenly all over rather than wadding them up.

In effect, going over an existing finish with an oil-varnish blend is similar to shining it up with paste wax. The difference is that an oil-varnish blend is more permanent. By the way, you should wait about a year between reapplications. Unlike wax, oil-varnish will build up on the surface. In many cases, an oil-varnish product can color deeply scarred spots.

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Oil and Varnish Blends continues

This technique works well on legs, doors, drawer fronts, cabinet sides, skirts, panels, and other such furniture parts. It could prove less successful on tabletops, desktops, and other heavily used surfaces where the soft finish might not give enough abrasion resistance. You probably would be better off to shine up the surface with paste wax in these situations.

Mixing oil (often linseed or tung oil) with some varnish (polyurethane varnish, in some products) creates a finishing material with a blend of qualities. The varnish provides a higher gloss and offers more protection than oil alone. The oil in the mix slows curing--giving you more time for application--but makes the cured finish softer than varnish alone.

You probably won't find oil-varnish finish labeled as such in stores. It's usually billed as an oil finish; some popular brands are Deftoil Danish Oil Finish, Minwax Antique Oil Finish, Olympic Antique Oil Finish, and Watco Danish Oil Finish.

Don't expect the labeling to shed much light on which oil and varnish are in the mix, or in what proportions. You may be able to dicipher the MSDS for these products to try to figure out what is in them. But maybe not and not without some experimentation. Fortunately, Sam Maloof, Bob Flexner and others have figured this out long ago. Maloof's famous 1-1-1 combination or Flexner's variations on this work, are cheap, easy to create and durable.

As you might expect, not all blends of oil and varnish give the same protection. Some combinations are better than others though the differences are often too subtle to detect. As store bought blends don't tell you the types or ratios of oil, varnish or other chemicals used, there can be many variables to consider.

The higher the varnish-to-oil ratio, the better the scratch, water, water-vapor and stain resistance. If you get the percentage of varnish too high, you lose some ease of application. For example, a ratio of 90% varnish to 10% oil will perform like varnish alone.

Using tung oil rather than boiled linseed in the mixture will make the the finish significantly more water-resistant. But the higher the percentage of tung oil, the more coats it will take to scheive an even, satin sheen.

While there are significant differences in the protective qualities of the varnishes you may use, these are difficult to detect when the film is thin. Your choice of varnish is not as significant as your choice of oil.

You can thin any blend with mineral spirits (or turpentine, which smells nice). This will make the oil/varnish mix easier to spread over large surfaces. Hint: you can easily make your own "wipe-on poly" by simply adding a reducer to to regular poly. This makes the mix into wipe-on poly. If you want the mix to dry faster, add a little"Japan" dryer.

So on to the oil/varnsih mix. With all of the above in mind, the simplest combination is the classic Sam Maloof one of 1/3 thinner, 1/3 oil and 1/3 polyurethane.

The resulting finish performs with some of the characteristics of each. The oil partof the blend reduces the gloss and makes the finish cure slowly. Application is easy because you have plenty of time. This means you cannot build oil/varnish blends to a more protective thickness. The varnish part of the blend gives the finish more body and more gloss. As a result, you can acheive an even sheen with only two coats instead of the usual three or more it takes with straight (polymerized) oil.The varnish also makes the oil/varnish blend more protective than straight oil becaue varnish is harder when cured and much more water- and water-vapor resistant than oil.

There are of course variations in any home-brew finish. You can change the proportions to vary the hardness of the final finish. You should also add Japan dryer to the mix to reduce curing time.

Most polymerized oils, wipe-on varnishes and oil/varnish blends smell like mineral spirits because of the significant percentage of the latter. You can't really tell what you have unless the container tells you (which few do). But there are three indicators to tell whether you have a wiping varnish or an oil/varnish.

Oil/varnish blends cure slowly and can take an hour or more to become tacky. Wipe-ons take 20 minutes or so depending on heat and humidity.

Wipe-ons cure hard. Oil/varnishes cure soft especially if the film is thick.

Any finishcontaining 10% or more oil will wrinkle when it cures as a thick film. Varnish won't wrinkle unless it is very thick. To test wrinkle, pour the finish on a piece of plate glass and let it cure over night. If it is wrinkled, it is an O/V blend. If not, it's straight varnish.

While I've used Watco Danish Oil Finish for many years, one of their selling points was that it made the wood 25% harder.The idea that an oil/varnish blend can make the wood harder is a silly claim. Any finish cured in the wood's pores will help the surface resistabrasions and make the wood seem harder. All finishes except wax and straight oil have the least hardening effect. Varnish, shellac, lacquer and even water based finishes cure much harder than any oil-containg finish.

For much more on finishes, see Bob Flexner's "Understanding Wood Finishes."

September Meeting Location

We have the wonderful opportunity to meet at the Stines Lake Charles kocation at 4501 Nelson Road Please enter the store and go to the back left in the store to the meeting room.

To get there go South on Nelson Road in Lake Charles going from I-10 or I-210 and tuen into the parking lot. Go to the back of the main entrance to the very back to the meeting room to find us.

Please take an opportunity to explore Stines before you leave to find the items for your shop or home that you may need. As always, thank the folks at Stines as you check out.

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