All the News that fits

Lake Charles Woodworkers Club, Inc. May 2017

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.

April Meeting Highlights

This past month we had a special treat with our gathering at the shop of Mitch Morgan. While Mitch's day job is that of an engineering consultant, his avocation is cabinet making and he is doing the job with great skill.

Mitch started out by building new cabinets for his shop and moved on to the kitchen of his home. Now he is doing another set for an office/sewing room for the home.

Mitch demonstrated the cabinet assembly table he constructed that is articulated such that the construction can be easily lifted and rotated as needed during assembly. He uses the Kreg pocket hole system as this can completely hide any holes or screws in the cabinets. Mitch also uses Cabinet Planner, a software product ($70 online) that provides design, cutting and views of your potential cabinets.

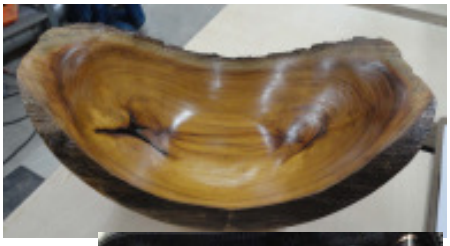
Mitch demonstrated the process of assembling one of the base cabinets going into the sewing room and this was a learning experience for all. Mitch showed us his techniques of clamping the parts together. He plans to build a new assembly table that will also raise the work pieces as needed, making assembly faster with much less work.

He described the cabinets in his shop as well noting that the mounted ones are hung with a French cleat screwed into the frame of the walls. The lower cabinets are all on hidden rolers so he can re-arrange the shop as needed. Mitch also told the tail of when he first saw the shop when he acquired the home -- it was a swamp with mildew running up the walls. After pouring a new slab over the exiting one, he's had no water in the shop since. In any case, it was a delight to see his shop and watch his skill at making and assembled cabinets. Thanks, Mitch for hosting the meeting and a great demonstration of your skill.!

J.W. Anderson started the Show and Tell this month with a pine endgrain cutting board with great figure finished with mineral oil. He also showed a very small spoke shave. You could shave down a tooth pick with this one. Pie Sonnier brought a found table that was missing a leg. After replacing the leg, he also replaced the top and refinished the table.

Steve Thomas constructed some nice mallets of pecan both round and square after studying the science of mallet design including angle of the mallet face, weight and balance. Gearge Carr continues his chip carving with a lovely carved clock of basswood.

Steve McCorquodale has been constructing cedar chests of a classic design for his daughter, son and spuse. Steve pointed out that each cedar tree has its own unique figure and after being slabed should be put under cover to protect the figure from sunlight. He recommended that a finish be oil based particularly for boxes and storage cabinets. Steve's design included movable storage trays.



Scot Pias showed us some hand carved kumiko latticwork panels. While they can be small, some are carved to be the size of room panels as well. Scot said the process is comptemplative work and plans to work on thinner wood as he progresses. Bubba Cheramie created a nice candy bowl with a natural edge out of mystery wood. Both Ronnie Krammer and Joe Comeaux showed off their recent pen turnings of various designs. Joe brought a wonderful timber that is 1-1/2 x 6 inches by 6-1/2 feet that will be a future auction/prize peice for those interested. Note that Gary Rock showed off some of his very fine work at the recent Spring Art Walk -- something you should try to attend in the Fall one. George Carr won the Show & Tell gift card from Stines.

Next -- May 13 at 9:00 A.M. at Stines in Lake Charles.

Assessing a Risky Business

Some of the courses I teach at SOWELA are business courses. While we talk about how to start a business, one of the things I cover are the risks involved. Not the possiblility of failure (always there) but the risk of what you do. Woodworking is a risky business.

For an insurance company's view, combining sawdust, products made of wood, hazardous and flammable glues and finishes, and electrical machinery that can generate sparks makes an explosive situation is one that many insurers want to avoid. Keep in mind that most homeowners' policies limit coverage to $2,500 for business-use items on premises and $250 away from home. For protection, separate business coverage can be a must. Most professional woodworkers have trouble getting property insurance and sometimes casualty, liability, or even health and life insurance at reasonable rates. Under the current and likely future tax rules, the cost of insurance for a business operation is deductable even if the business is a proprietaryship or S-corporation.

Woodworkers looking for insurance can reduce risks to increase the chances of finding some at reasonable rates, according to Chris Kendall, administrative manager for commercial lines at Cincinnati Insurance Companies. His company covers woodworkers and other small businesses across the nation, and he suggests the following to help obtain insurance.

Ground all electrical equipment and buildings. If you smoke, quit, and don't let anyone in your shop smoke. Keep a clean shop. Proof of janitorial service helps. Spray or paint in an appropriate booth or have it done. Use dust-collection equipment. Store flammable and hazardous materials in locked cabinets away from sources of combustion. Keep paperwork, such as receipts from licensed hazardous waste haulers or dumps, to prove you dispose of hazardous materials properly. Keep your inventory of expensive woods to a minimum. If possible, store wood in a building separate from the workshop, just in case of fire. Reduce your liability by keeping customers out of your shop. Do business in a separate room.

Many of these steps are expensive. But the tradeoff for not spending money on safety is paying higher insurance rates or simply going without insurance. Barry Humphus.

Working Small Parts

When cutting and shaping petite pieces, regardless of what tool you use, one universal rule applies: Keep your fingers a safe distance from the machine's cutting edges. Not only will your digits thank you, you'll also improve accuracy by better controlling your workpiece during the cut.

The force a big blade applies to a small part can make the workpiece difficult to control. Regain command by adding accessories that grip the workpiece firmly—such as the zero clearance mitersaw table—while your hands remain a safe distance from the blade. By gluing a hardwood scrap to a piece of plywood, you create a platform that closes the gaps in both the fence and the table, preventing a workpiece or offcut from falling into them. Here are some other solutions for cutting narrow, short, and thin stock safely.

The drill press may not be as intimidating as a tablesaw or router, but can still be dangerous if the workpiece isn't properly secured. If the force securing the piece isn't as strong as the torque from the spinning drill bit, the bit may grab the workpiece and rip it from your hands. Prevent that from happening.

In scrap, drill a shallow hole, cover it with double-faced tape, and press the knob into the hole. Clamp the scrap beneath the bit and drill slowly. Notch a scrap to fit your workpiece, glue the scrap to a base, and mount an in-line clamp to hold the workpiece tightly in place. A V-shaped notch bandsawn into one jaw of a handscrew captures a dowel, keeping it from spinning during drilling.

For small items that need to be squared, I've clamped a jointer or other plane upside down in a vise along with a fence clamped to the outside edge of the plane to create a mechanical jointer. This way, you control a cut without having to be concerned with small peices on an actual jointer machine.

When adding an edge treatment to a small workpiece, keep it from being flung across your shop. For thin items, an extra layer of wood adds thickness to reach the router bit's bearing. Tape on a jobber stick to help control the workpiece. To make narrow moldings, rout a profile on a wide and stable blank; then, rip away the molding. For multiples, rout both edges before ripping. Further, when routing narrow or irregular-shaped pieces, hot-glue on a scrapwood extension, and, after routing, cut it away. Clamp square or rectangular parts into a handscrew, flat against the router table' stop. A handscrew's wood jaws won't cause damage if they touch the bit.

Most power sanders have broad abrasive surfaces better suited to working with large workpieces, so using these tools to sand small parts safely presents a challenge. Again, an upside down tool can work well. I've clamped a belt sander in a vise with the belt up. This provides a surface that you can use to carefully sand small parts. Later, I built a jig to hold my Craftsman belt sander so I can use this almost anywhere in the shop as needed. Barry Humphus

Safety Check List

Sure, you know your tools and materials. You've done it all before, right? All the same, you can never take safety for granted. There are a dozen things to ponder before you begin any woodworking project. Just check them off one by one.

Do you know exactly what you're going to do, and feel like doing it? Think through the operation and the moves you must make before you make them. Some of us work full time and hard. You get home and decide you are going to your shop for a while to make progress on that project. Don't do anything with power tools if you're tired, angry, anxious, or in a hurry. The project will likely wait for you.

Is your work area clean? Keep your work area uncluttered, swept, and in particular, well lighted. The work space around equipment must be adequate to safely perform the job you're going to do.

What are you wearing? Don't wear loose clothing, work gloves, neck ties, rings, bracelets, or wristwatches. They can become entangled with moving parts. Tie back long hair or wear a cap (though we've noticed over the years that we have less hair to worry about this issue).

Do you have the right blade or cutter for the job? Be sure that any blade or cutter you're going to use is clean and sharp so it will cut freely without being forced. There is nothing more satisfying than a very sharp tool when cutting anything and especially wood. From a plane to a turning gouge to that Freud ten inch fine table saw blade, it is a satisfying process. Keep it sharp.

Are all power tool guards in place? Guards -- and anti-kickback devices -- also must work. Check to see that they're in good condition and in position before operating the equipment. We know that there are blade gaurds that really get in the way, particularly on table saws. Did you ever watch a woodworking show where the table saw blade guard was in place? But still, whenever you can, use one.

Where are the start/stop switches on your power equipment? Ensure that all the woodworking machines you'll use have working start/stop buttons or switches within you're easy reach. Knee cutoff switches work well as do magnetict switches that when you have a bind, make you clear the work and reset before proceeding.

Are the power cords in good shape? Don't use tools with signs of power-cord damage: you must replace them. Only work with an extension cord that's the proper size for the job, and route/saw/cut it so it won't be underfoot.

Do you have your power tools properly grounded? Tools other than double-insulated ones come with three-wire grounding systems that must be plugged into three-hole, grounded receptacles. Never remove the grounding prong from the plug. Another good practice is to be sure your electrical system has some sort of dead short or ground fault system in place. A simple ground fault curcuit between your power equipment and the mains of your shop is a cheap and simple solution.

Do you know what safety equipment you need for the job? Around cutting tools, always wear safety glasses, goggles, or a face shield. Always add a dust mask when you are sanding. Wear hearing protection when required. And if you can't hear someone from 3' away, the machine is too loud and hearing damage may occur.

Where are the chuck keys and wrenches for your equipment? Check that all chuck keys, adjusting wrenches, and other small tools have been removed from the machine so they won't interfere with the operation.

Have you checked your stock? Inspect the wood you're going to use for nails, loose knots, and other materials. They can be hidden "bombs" that possibly may injure you or damage your equipment. Take a close look at each board you may run through a table saw, jointer or planer.

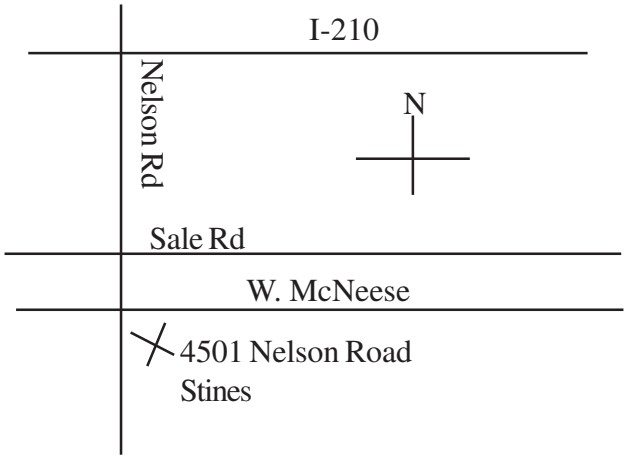
Where is your pushstick? Keep a pushstick or pushblock within easy reach before beginning any cut or machining operation. Always avoid getting into awkward stances where a sudden slip could cause a hand to move into the blade or cutter. Don't have a push stick or block? At minimum, make your own or go buy one or more. Barry Humphus

May 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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