
LAKE CHARLES WOODWORKERS CLUB, INC.

John Marcon, President

Bob Ferguson, Treas. & Newsletter Editor

OCTOBER 1997

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The September meeting at Lynn Boddie's shop was a treat for everyone who had not been there before. Lynn discussed natural finishes and stains for furniture restoration as well as new work.

To prepare for reworking old finishes, Lynn suggested very thorough cleaning and dewaxing as necessary including the use of compressed air. Most waxes can be removed with naphtha or paint thinner.

Lynn's recommendation is to use 'reversible' finishes starting with multiple coats of a premium grade shellac (such as J.E. Moser's available from Woodworkers Supply and others) followed by lacquer coats.

For new work finishes Lynn suggests careful sanding and or scraping to get the best possible finish followed by the stain (as necessary), shellac and lacquer coats. Shellac can take a long time to completely harden and he recommends up to several weeks before other products are applied over shellac. As shellac is alcohol based, subsequent coats fuse into one another. This is the reason that sanding after each coat is not needed for later coat adhesion.

By using alcohol based dyes, wood grain will not be raised as much as with water based products. Lynn suggests that dye mixes should be thin as color can be added gradually to achieve the desired results. One of the great advantages of this technique is that color adjustments can be made at almost any stage in the finishing process including any final polish or wax coats.

Lynn also demonstrated the use of a milling machine in woodworking and there was a demonstration of his large powerful lathe. Mrs. Boddie's cookies were also very well received.

ANNUAL ELECTION

In September two individuals were elected to the newly-formed Board of Directors. The Board now is composed of the following persons:

Joe DeBeir
Brent Evans
Barry Humphus

George Kuffel
John Perry (Ex-Officio)

FOR SALE

Member Dudley Harvey (478-9058) has a Makita Model 6011D 12v & 9v cordless drill for sale w/ charger, 2 batteries and case for \$125.00. Dudley also has a set of 6 Fostner bits: 1/4", 1/2", 3/4", 7/8", 1" & 1 1/8" for \$25.00.

Drill Press Clamping

It's almost impossible to clamp small pieces together without the twisting action of the clamp causing them to shift.

One solution is to use a drill press and hex head bolt as a clamp. You can exert pressure in a vertical line — with no rotation. To do this, first align the pieces and make a pencil mark across the joint line. Then, place the pieces on the drill press table and position the bolt about 1" above the workpieces. Insert the hex head bolt in the chuck and tighten.

Next, apply glue and match up the pencil marks. Turn the handle on the drill press to lower the head of the bolt so it presses tight against the workpieces. Tighten the depth adjustment to hold the bolt in place. This clamps the joint tight without twisting.

NEXT MEETING

Oct. 22 - Wed. Evening -6:00 p.m.

Stine's Lumber Co.
Ruth Street, Sulphur, LA

Subject: - A Demo of DeWalt Power Tools

FUTURE MEETINGS

Nov. 8 - Toys Work Session

Removing Old Veneer

Removing old veneer from a workpiece can be a nightmare or relatively easy undertaking. This all depends on what type of glue was used to bond the veneer to the surface. The veneer on most antique pieces was originally bonded with hide glue and although very strong, has little resistance to heat and water.

You can take advantage of this by using a household iron to help you remove the veneer. The heat of the iron will soften the glue and the steam from the iron will force moisture into the glue, thus breaking the bond between veneer and surface. Make sure the iron is filled with water so you can use the steam. Set the iron at it's highest heat setting and let it heat up. Next, using a wide spatula or putty knife, start at one corner and try to slightly lift the veneer by placing the blade between the veneer and surface then pushing in and prying up.

Once lifted, place the iron directly on top of the veneer and let it slowly heat the surface. Move the iron in a circular motion while periodically applying steam. The veneer will gradually start to lift as the hide glue starts to soften. Work into to the center and finally off to the other edge until all the veneer has been removed. You may run into some stubborn spots, in these areas try applying water directly between the veneer and the surface by squirting or injecting. After all the old veneer has been removed, make sure to remove all remains of hide glue left on the surface. You can use warm water and a scraper for this operation. Let the surface dry well before sanding and preparing for re-veneering or other operations.

If the piece has been built in the past 50 years, the veneer was most likely bonded with either a yellow, white or some other type of synthetic resin glue. While the initial bond of these adhesives are not much stronger than the old hide glues, many of these glues are extremely resistant to heat and moisture, therefore removing the same method that is used for hide glue will not work effectively on these glues.

The best way to approach removing veneer that has been bonded with a modern adhesive is by trial and error. Sometimes you may get lucky and the veneer will lift off without much work because the initial gluing application was not performed properly due to lack of adhesive, uneven application or inadequate clamping pressure.

Once again, start at one corner and try to slightly lift the veneer by placing the blade between the veneer and surface then pushing in and prying up. If it does not budge, you may have to use a chisel and actually break away some of the veneer from the corner. In certain cases like with the hide glue, soaking also helps. Sometimes a mixture of 50 percent vinegar and 50 percent water will help soften the adhesive

somewhat. If this does not work, try a solvent like lacquer thinner or acetone.

The bottom line is that removing veneer can often be a hard time consuming job and sometimes it all boils down to patience and a lot of good old fashioned elbow grease.

Removing Water Marks And Rings

Most white marks or rings on furniture are usually left by water or moisture penetrating through the protective finish and then getting trapped below the finish. When this happens the finish in that area appears white and loses its transparency. This usually appears in the shape of a ring and happens on a surface like a tabletop. This often happens on older pieces where the finish has started to crack or craze. The moisture will seep through the small cracks in the finish.

Use A Lubricant

This first method is the easiest and less likely to damage the finish. Apply any type of lubricant oily substance (petroleum jelly, furniture wax, liquid furniture polish etc.) and then let it sit at least 8 hours. If the ring was not too pronounced, the moisture under the finish will have been replaced by the lubricant you applied.

Try Alcohol

Slightly dampen a clean cloth with some denatured alcohol and then pass it lightly over the water mark. Make sure you keep the cloth moving and just try to skim the surface. Be very careful. Alcohol can dissolve a shellac finish and could damage a lacquer or water based finish. Start with a very small amount of alcohol on the cloth and add more if needed. Test this process on an unseen area of the piece. After about 30 seconds to 1 minute you should start to see the ring lighten up. Alcohol will remove most water rings.

Rubbing Out The Marks

In the worst cases you will have to physically remove the mark by using a lubricant and abrasive to rub it out. Apply some paraffin oil or mineral oil over the mark and use 0000 steel wool to rub the mark out. Be careful not to cut completely through the finish. Once the mark has been removed, the steel wool will have left the area dull. You will now have to even out the sheen in that area so it is even with the rest of the piece. To do this, once again use paraffin oil or mineral oil as a lubricant along with finer abrasives like pumice powder, or even finer, rottenstone. The finer the abrasive you use, the shiner the finish. Rubbing out the mark is the most likely to do damage to the finish and is the most time consuming. It should only be a last resort if the other methods have failed.

Sanding Wood Surfaces

The first step to a good finish is to make sure the surface the finish will be applied to is free of all defects such as dents, gouges, scratches and milling marks. Most finishes bring out the natural grain and beauty of the wood. Unfortunately, they may also magnify any defects that may have gone unnoticed. What appears to be a minor defect on raw wood will stand out like a sore thumb when a stain or finish is applied.

Sanding Sense

Surface preparation should begin before the project is assembled. For example: any surface that can't be easily reached after assembly should be sanded before assembly. In general attention to detail such as tight joint lines and excess glue squeeze out should be addressed during construction. Excess stain will accumulate between poorly fitted joints and will appear as unsightly dark lines when the finish has been applied. The glue squeeze out should be left to dry and then removed by using a scraper. During construction constantly ask yourself, "How will this affect the surface when I apply a stain or finish"?

Mill Marks

When boards are run through a planer, the rotating planer knives take shallow bites out of the wood. Mill marks appear as a series of repeating raised bumps that run across the grain of the board. If the knives are very dull, the marks really stand out, but more often they are less pronounced, in some cases invisible to the naked eye. It's important to note that mill marks are present on every board that has been run through a planer, regardless of quality or source. Sometimes mill marks are very hard to see. If you don't detect and remove them, they will really stand out once a stain or finish has been applied. The best way to sight mill marks or any other minor flaws or defects is to use reflected light. Position a lamp above the work surface at about a 30 degree angle to the surface. You will be surprised when the marks you could not see before now look like mountain peaks and valleys. Overall, the best way to remove mill marks and other minor defects like small surface scratches is by sanding.

Sanding: Choosing The Right Paper

There are several types of sandpaper, some are designed for sanding finishes like lacquer and varnish while others are best for sanding raw wood. Garnet Paper is an orange colored sandpaper that is made of a natural abrasive. It is excellent for sanding raw wood. Another type of paper that is favored by furniture and cabinet makers for sanding raw wood is Aluminum Oxide paper (sometimes known as production paper). This is the standard brownish colored paper found in most hardware and paint stores. Aluminum Oxide is a man made abrasive and will last a little longer than Garnet paper. Either of the two will produce excellent results. The types of paper you want to stay away from for sanding raw wood are the Silicon Carbide (Wet or Dry) paper which is black in color, and the light gray colored

papers which are lubricated and used to sand lacquers and other topcoats.

Grits.

Sandpaper is graded by using a number system. The finer the paper, the higher the number. Garnet and Alum. Oxide paper range in grit sizes from 36 (Very Coarse) to 240 (Fine). Even finer sandpaper can be purchased for sanders such as 3M's Microfine series from 100 microns down to 15 microns (in this case, the lower the number the finer the grit).

Choosing A Sander

Over the past few years a variety of sanders have been introduced onto the woodworking market. Some work very well, while others, not so well. The three most common sanders used for surface prep are a belt sander, orbital sander (pad sander) and random orbital sander. Each sander produces a distinct surface finish. A belt sander is best used when a lot of material has to be removed from the surface. For example when glued up boards have to be leveled. It is a dangerous tool, make one mistake and you may wind up ruining the workpiece. Even though a belt sander removes stock quickly, I don't think it's worth the risk. The belt sander leaves straight lined scratch pattern. While orbital sanders do not remove stock like belt sanders, some of the heavier models like the Porter Cable Model 330 Speed Bloc will do a great job of removing scratches and milling marks when a piece of 80 grit sandpaper is mounted to it. These sanders leave small orbital scratch patterns that are nearly invisible to the naked eye. When using an orbital sander, don't press down too hard on the worksurface. Let the weight of the machine do the job. Although you can initially sand across grain make sure you take your last passes with the grain to avoid leaving scratch marks on the stock. The random orbital sander creates an orbital as well as revolving motion, and removes stock much quicker than a pad sander and at the same time leaves a scratch pattern that is almost swirl free, even when sanding across grain. To properly use this sander, start it while it is on the wood. If you wait until it is running at full speed before you set it on the work, it may gouge out the surface.

Sanding Sequence

Many woodworkers believe that if you sand the work to a super fine grit, you will achieve a better finish. This is not true. The only purpose for sanding is to remove mill marks, tool marks, other defects and to smooth the surface. When sanding, sandpaper leaves small grooves relative to the grit size of the paper you are using. By sanding with progressively finer grits you are making these grooves smaller.

Lake Charles Woodworkers Club
c/o Bob Ferguson
2326 22nd Street
Lake Charles, LA 70601