All the News that fits

Lake Charles Woodworkers Club, Inc. July 2014

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.

June Meeting Highlights

June's host waere Jeff and Mary Cormier and as always we thank them for a great meeting place (and Mary's great sausage biscuits).

Steve Thomas remnded folks of the up-coming Man Show in Sulphur ending on July 7th.

Steve also reminded us of safety issues even with the relatively safe lathe. Steve had an incident with a bowl coming apart on his lathe and don't forget the piece of bowl stuck in the ceiling of Gary Rock's shop - left as a reminder to him and all who visit.

Note that the Woodworkers Paradise is going out of business in the Beaumont area so call them if you want some great discounts on the items they my still have.

Out guest speaker this month was long time commercial painter Mr. Danny Prejean. Danny described some of the best ways to paint both interior and external surfaces. He further described some of the automotive products he can use to better serve his customers. Danny also discussed paint drying extenders that he uses from time to time in his work for both latex and oil-based paint.

Danny mentioned the PPG, Sherman-Williams and other products that have come onto the market for much thicker and more resiliemt paint products particularly for outdoor use. These are 7 mil thick rather than typical 1 mil thick paint.. These provide substantial duration, long life, do not fade or peal and provide self-priming. However, most of these products should be applied by a professional.

Danny suggested that if you want these new age products, contact him as he can provide you with good discounts but remember that the products should be applied by a professinal installer. One more thing Danny mentioned was that these new age products can paint over latex and in addition suggested that you can paint over an oil based paint with latex. However, you shuld likely contact Danny should you want to do this as this product is expensive ($85 gal.) with a cure time of up to 21 days.

Danny Prejean also discussed calking products and just said that you should consider the most expensive based on the application particularly the acrylic products.

Danny suggested that you pre-soak your rollers and brushes with water with latex (water-based) paint products. He also mentioned that you can paint over an oil-based paint with a latex paint only if you used an oil-based primer.

For Show and Tell, Jeff Cormier showed a wonderful raised panel jig with tracks that was super slick in terms of how you may move yur cutting piece through the jig.

Bob Theaux did a great commenertive box with a picture of the Iwo Jema flag raising. Bob was there just a month after the event and the wonderful box was of walnut.

Ray Kebodeaux did a pare of French-syle riolling pins made from walnut as well as a nice mortise jig with adjustable stops. Steve Thomas brought another of his beautiful kaleidoscope using glitter wands as the source of the shapes. He also had a large spherical vase that was segmented and made of maple, walnut, ash, basswod, coffenut and mahogany. Steve added an intereresting pecoan bowl that blew out while being turned. He patched the hole with purple heart, basswood and mahogany.

Gary Rock had some wormy gum bowls finished in wipe-on poly plus a hackberry bowl with a high gloss finish. Don Elfert showed off a nice wood dust collector attachment for his saw from a plan appearing with Woodworker Journal.

Coming Up. . . Saturday, July 12, 9:00 A.M. at the shop of Steve and Cathy Thomas.

World Wide Woods: Aspen

Aspen, due to sheer quantity alone, supports much of the logging industry across the Great Lakes states and Canada. Abundant because it propagates and grows rapidly in areas cleared by fire and harvest, aspen has many commercial uses. It's found in furniture, toothpicks, matchsticks, boxes and crates, paneling, and chipboard. And, this plentiful tree has been a popular source for paper pulp since the late 1940s.

Beavers love aspen bark and consider it a staple food and favor the wood for construction. They'll often gnaw down trees a half-mile or more from their damsite, and then drag or float them home. Grouse, too, cherish aspen, but for its succulent seeds--so small that it takes more than two million to make a pound.

Quaking aspen (*populus tremuloides*), so-called because its leaves flutter in the slightest breeze, has an unbelievably wide growing range. It grows in a mostly northern belt stretching from Labrador and Newfoundland to Alaska's Yukon River. But, you can even find it in Mexico and Tennessee. Bigtooth (or large-tooth) aspen (*populus grandidentata*), which also quakes, prefers the Great Lakes states and New England.

Akin to willow and cottonwood, aspen rarely exceeds 60' high and diameters of 20". In their first 20 to 30 years it grows rapidly, and quickly renews a forest.

Bark on young trees may be white or greenish white, with dark gray or black welts and ridges. On older trees the bark can be 2" thick, black near the base, and deeply fissured. If you confuse aspen's bark with that of white birch, the leaves provide identification. Both aspen have oval-shaped leaves with toothed edges and stems flattened on the sides.

Sapwood comprises the majority of wood in aspen. It has the whiteness of holly or poplar. The small heartwood core produces light brown wood, often streaked and discolored. It weighs 25 pounds per cubic foot.

Fine-grained, straight, and uniform in texture, aspen generally lacks distinct pattern. Occasional mottle- and stripe-figured logs become veneers.

Aspen contains very little resin, and has toughness as well as exceptional stiffness. The wood resists splitting when nailing or screwing, yet you can work it easily with hand tools because of its softness. It also glues well.

Due to the tendency for aspen's wood fibers to fuzz when worked, you need to use tools with sharp blades and cutters. While this wood takes paint readily, like maple, it blotches when stained unless you first apply a sealer.

You'll find aspen a stable wood that wears without splintering. However, in conditions favoring decay, it deteriorates. For carving, aspen makes a first-rate substitute for basswood. You also can fashion it into light-duty furniture, solid paneling, and millwork.

Aspen has no odor and imparts no taste to foodstuffs, so it's ideal for baskets, bowls, and containers. Children's toys made from aspen remain splinter-free.

Across the southern reaches of the nation, aspen lumber may be hard to find. Where sold, however, the boards will be high quality, but generally neither unusually wide nor thicker than 1". Expect to pay about $1.15 per board foot for lumber and around 50 cents per square foot for mottle- and stripe-figured veneer.

Basswood

Among the most important of America's nectar-producing trees, the basswood makes itself at home along city streets as well as in the forest. In cityscapes, nurserymen call the hardy, decorative tree American linden. But in the woods, it's basswood, beetree, lime, or whitewood. Regardless of its name, basswood has proven its value. Indians of New York state's Iroquois nation carved ceremonial masks from the sapwood of living basswood trees, then split the greenwood masks from the trunk. The gummy inner bark provided bandages. And from its dried fibers they wove rope.

Beekeepers even today appreciate the quality of basswood-derived honey. In summer, the tree's fragrant flower clusters provide a strong-flavored nectar. Basswood stock also becomes the very boxes in which the honeycombs are stored and shipped.

The forest-products industry lumps the four native North American basswood species together in the marketplace, for there are few differences between them, except where they grow. Tilia americana, of the northern Great Lakes states, provides most of the basswood harvested. In a setting of mixed hardwoods in the well-drained ground of a stream valley, basswood can grow to 90' tall with a straight trunk 3' in diameter. But because basswood sprouts from the stump, it's often seen as a clump of three or four smaller trunks. Young basswood trees feature light gray, smooth bark, while that of older trees becomes darker and deeply ridged. In late winter, small reddish-brown buds appear on branch twigs. Their nutlike flavor signals that you've found a basswood tree. When leaves form, they have a distinctive heart shape with lightly serrated edges. The leaves also display an unusual trait: The undersides, not the tops, are shiny. Clusters of sweet-smelling white or cream-colored flowers follow the leaves. Weighing about 26 pounds per cubic foot air-dried, the wood has a tan color, and in some cases may

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Basswood continues

be nearly white. You'll find the grain of this soft hardwood straight, close, and normally featureless. Occasional basswood stock may display some dark stain, which doesn't affect the wood's performance but may mar a project. Dry basswood is stable.

Carvers prefer basswood because it holds detail well, doesn't split, has straight-grain, and carves easily. They usually prefer air-dried, slow-grown northern stock. Basswood also can become drawer stock, hidden furniture parts, and painted items. In industry, it plays a role as boxes and food containers. As veneer, it can underlie fine cabinet woods in plywood. This light, versatile wood also works for picture frames, toys, and millwork such as window sashes. It even makes fine turning wood.

Many large hardwood retailers outside its natural range carry basswood in board form. Specialty suppliers offer basswood carving blocks and blanks. Expect to pay around $2 per board foot for select and better 4/4 stock, and about $3 and more per board foot for thicker boards. Veneer isn't available at retail. Both northern and southern varieties of basswood show little contrast between early wood and late wood, although northern basswood provides tighter-grained, finer-textured stock. Carvers also will want to avoid basswood with mineral stains, unless the project will be painted.

Basswood's low-hardness rating makes it ideal for hand tools. Power planing basswood poses no problems. You'll find jointing effortless, tas well. Because the wood is dense, ripping requires a rip-set blade with 24 teeth or less to avoid burning. In crosscutting, it won't tear out or chip.

Use sharp bits and don't rush the router when shaping basswood, as its tight grain and density does tend to burn (although burns easily sand off). Unlike some other lightweight, straight-grained woods (such as redwood), basswood fastens well with nails or screws. And it's not necessary to predrill. Sanding basswood proves to be a soothing, smoothing task. But when it comes to staining, blotching can result. If uneven staining appears on a test piece, apply wood conditioner before staining. Remember, though, even wood conditioner won't subdue discolored streaks in the wood.

Because basswood takes fine detail, it's great for relief, figure, and chip carving. Basswood requires control or your carving tool may go further along a stroke than planned. Strengthen details subject to breakage with a thinned coat of woodworker's glue (it won't take stain) worked into the wood.

For stability in use, always work wood with a maximum moisture content of 8 percent. Feed straight-grained wood into planer knives at a 90° angle. To avoid tearing, feed figured wood or twisted grain at a slight angle (about 15°), and take shallow cuts of about 1/32".

For clean cuts, rip with a rip-profile blade that has 24-32 teeth. Smooth crosscutting requires at least a 40-tooth blade. Avoid using twist drills. They tend to wander and cause breakout. Use brad-point bits and a backing board under the workpiece to reduce tearout and always drill pilot holes for screws. Rout with sharp, preferably carbide-tipped, bits and take shallow passes to avoid burning. Carving softwoods, and a soft hardwood like basswood, means fairly steep gouge bevels-greater than 20°.

Camphorwood

Centuries ago, the unsanctioned cutting of a camphor tree in China or Formosa (Taiwan) was punishable by death. That's because camphorwood (Cinnamomum camphora), native to those countries as well as to Japan, was reserved for sacred ceremonial items, such as the Chinese mu-yu drum used in temples. But chang-mu, as the wood is called in China, eventually flourished in foreign trade. Ship captains and other seafarers sought it for their sea chests to ward off moths.

Perhaps it was sawyers cutting camphorwood who discovered that its scent also opened up stuffy noses. Word of camphorwood's reputedly powerful medicinal properties spread to Europe and America, and soon even common folk considered it a cure-all. Indeed, the medicinal compound called camphor, refined from the tree bark, eventually found its way into ointments for the relief of muscle spasms and nasal congestion.

Today, chemical substitutes replace much natural camphor, but stiff competition still erupts between lumbar buyers and drug manufacturers when camphorwood comes up for sale. While you won't find camphorwood at lumberyards, it occasionally finds its way to dealers of exotic woods. If you happen upon some, you'd be wise to work it into a silverware chest -- camphorwood keeps silver from tarnishing.

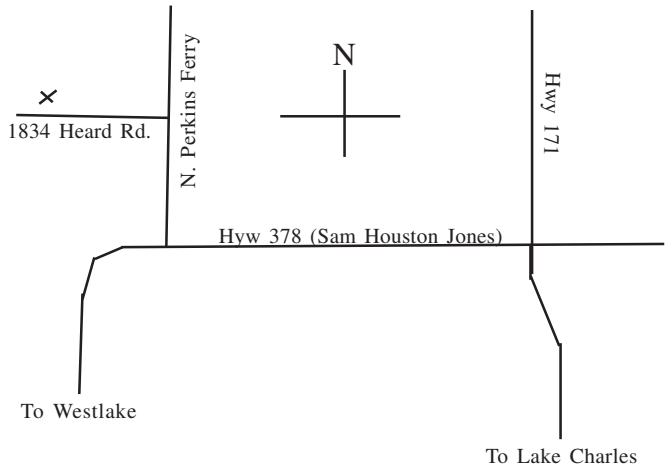
The camphor tree, an evergreen, grows slowly. It takes 50 years or more before one becomes large enough to distill camphor from its bark. In that time, the tree can reach 100' tall, with the spread of its branches frequently double its height. A mature tree also develops many large burls, which, as veneer, become marquetry and facing for very expensive paneling. All the above by Barry Humphus with some help from Wood Magazine.

The July 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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