

Steve Thomas, President
Joe Comeaux Treasurer

Officers and Directors

Barry Humphus, Editor, George Kuffel
Gary Rock, Jeff Cormier, Dick Trough

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; Gary Rock: 433-1679; Eltee Thibodeaux: 436-1997; Dick Trough: 583-2683. Each have years of experience and knowledge.

July Meeting Highlights

The July meeting was held at Cathy and Steve Thomas' great shop. Steve said that George Carr is about to have neck and back surgery so keep him in your thoughts.

For safety, Bob Theaux discussed a table saw mishap when cutting thin plywood. Make certain that you stand to the side of the work piece when cutting this material as it can easily catch a tooth and fly back. New member Dustin Guidry reminded folks to clamp smaller work pieces before routing them based on a minor mishap in his shop.

For Show and Tell, John Griffin shared some of his experiences in doing marketry boxes in walnut and maple. He got some great information on veneering from joewoodworker.com as well. He used a Franklin Titebond product called Cold Veneer as the glue (available from

Rockler and many others).

Steve Thomas showed off a new segmented bowl of cherry, maple and walnut with a Greek symbol motif. Steve also has made a couple of very interesting kaleidoscopes using horizontal tubes of glitter suspended in mineral oil (Hobby Lobby) and using a tapered set of first surface mirrors. Steve also showed us a nicely featured caulk gun and said that caulking tubes can be easily sealed with Press and

Seal or even a dab of hot glue.

Gary Rock continues to amaze us with his creative bowls and hollow forms. His white oak bowl was finished with wipe-on poly. His hollow form used sycamore and combined pyrography with a western Indian theme.

J.W. Anderson showed his latest bench of cypress

that used cedar bungs in a decorative way. I'm the proud owner of one of his benches and it occupies a place in my dining area.

Dustin Guidry showed one of his great crawfish paddles finished with butcher block oil with an LSU motif. Dustin also discussed how he transferred the logos and uses pyrography to create the images.

Bob Theaux showed off a system to support pipe clamps during glue-up and described a method of removing small dents in wood using a damp cloth and iron. Ray Kibodeaux described using a pre-stain conditioner that limits blotching in most woods. Bubba Cheramie brought an interesting child seat that transforms into several configurations including a rocker, high chair and desk.

Jeff Cormier showed us a neat finger joint cutting jig that works very well for long work pieces. A tip came from J.W. Anderson who said that the cooking product PAM works very well as a twist drill lubricant.

Ray Kibodeaux had a turned cypress blue bird house set up to be mounted on a threaded pole. Steve Thomas won the Show and Tell gift card.

Coming Up . . . Saturday, August 9 at 9:00 A.M. at the studio of John Marcom. Guest speaker will be Gary Breaux who will give a talk about faux painting techniques.



Rock Your Router

It often requires a second glance at a router bit to select the correct cutter for the desired shape. For a reference of the bit profile, rout an 8" length of scrap material with each bit. Crosscut the profile to a shorter length. With hook-and-loop material, hang the profile near the respective bit. Then hold the profile to the end of your workpiece before you make any cuts. Always return the profiles and bits to the correct storage spots.

Edge-routing narrow, curved workpieces becomes a challenge without a router table. The router keeps tipping, digging the bit into your work and spoiling it. From scrapwood the same thickness as your workpiece, cut straight or curved supporting pieces about 1" wide. Arrange them around your workpiece, and then rout away. With the router riding on both the workpiece and the supports, you'll avoid nicked edges and chewed-up corners. Be sure to make the supports the same height as the workpiece. If you use double-faced tape to hold the workpiece in position, for instance, use it to hold your supports, too.

A tight collet prevents your router bit from slipping up or down and ensures safer routing. But those tight collets don't loosen easily. When tightening or loosening router collets, you actually can gain more leverage with one hand than if you used two. Here's how.

First, position the two wrenches so they fit within your grip. Squeeze the wrench handles together to tighten or loosen the collet. Doing it this way, you won't bang your knuckles together. The other great advantage is that you will not over-tighten the bit. Always run the bit all the way into the collet then back it out just a hair.

Template guide bushings for your router can jam tightly after just a little use. If you can't unscrew yours with your fingers and you don't want to rough up the edge of the bushing with a pair of pliers, try this simple technique using a bent nail.

Drill a 1/8" hole on the edge of the bushing close enough to the center to clear the threads underneath. Then, the next time your bushing sticks, simply insert a bent finishing nail in the 1/8" hole and push the other end of the nail counterclockwise against the center shaft on the bushing. The leverage from the nail will loosen the bushing easily.

When molding long workpieces on a router table, the workpiece must be held flat against the table and fence in order for the router bit to cut a consistent, smooth profile. Even with the help of feather boards, bowed workpieces used to cause me fits because they wouldn't lie flat. Narrow stock, which nearly always has some bow in it, was always the worst.

To cut consistent profiles on bowed stock, examine these workpieces and place them with the bow down for best results. This takes the spring out of the board that occurs with the crown of the bow up. Use feather boards, but holding the workpiece firmly against the tabletop and fence at the router bit requires much less pressure with the crown facing down.

When you need to rout any type of closed pattern in the interior of a workpiece, such as the chip/dip tray, choose a plunge router. With a fixed-base router you have to tip the router into the cut—risky because you can damage the workpiece or template or possibly injure yourself.

Whether you use commercial templates or make your own, you'll need to use either a guide bushing or a top-bearing pattern bit to register against the template. For cuts deeper than your bit can reach, use a collet extension, which fits into your router collet and has another collet for your bit.

When making signs cut into wood, you've got two options. First, you can sketch the lettering onto your workpiece, and then freehand rout along the lines. But that requires a steady hand—one slip-up and you'll have to start over. Or, use a commercial sign-making system, shown in photo, with a guide bushing in the plunge base.

For small signs with smaller lettering, I found that a Dremel Tool mounted in their router base can be a great job particularly if you are hand cutting. The Dremel is light and very easy to control but it does not have as much power as almost any regular router. Go slow.

As with sign-making, it takes a steady hand to rout inlay recesses freehand. Mess up and you're forced to mend the goof. By using templates with bearing-guided bits or guide bushings, you eliminate the chances of veering off course. And whether the inlay serves for decoration or to patch a flaw in the wood, store-bought kits, provide everything you need to rout the recess as well as exact-fitting inlays.

Brent Evans, Dick Hopes, George Kuffel and myself spent a full two days routing some 25 signs for the original Millennium Park project using a series of sign templates.

Hanging something on a wall but don't want to use a hanger bracket or wire? A slotted keyhole does the job nicely and won't be seen, because the screw head and shank slip into the slot. Many manufacturers make router bits specifically for making these keyhole slots in several sizes; choose the one that best fits the screws you'll use. You can use one keyhole slot for small projects or two or three for larger ones. It's always best to drive the screws into wall studs, so lay out your keyholes accordingly. Barry Humphus with some nice help from Wood Magazine.

More On Routers

You can fuss with rulers and depth gauges all you want, but here are two quick and easy ways to precisely set your plunge router cutting depth.

The method uses different drill bit thicknesses to exactly set a router's plunge depth. First, place the router on your bench and plunge the bit until it touches the benchtop. Then lock it in place. Loosen the depth stop-rod, and sandwich a drill bit of a diameter equal to the plunge depth between the turret stop and rod. Then tighten the rod in place. Unlock the plunge mechanism, and you're ready to plunge into your project.

The method uses spacers planed to the same thickness as the depth of your plunge cuts. Place the router on a pair of spacers, and plunge the bit until it touches the benchtop. Then lower and tighten the stop-rod.

Adjusting a jig or straightedge to widen a dado just a hair can create more problems than it solves. Instead, leave your guide in place and add strips of tape along the router base edge. That nudges the bit away from the guide when you recut. Four layers of blue painter's tape equals about 1/64".

Whether you're routing dovetail slots, or T-slotted wall storage system panels, there's a time-saving jig for you. It indexes from the previously routed slot to ensure evenly spaced dados, dovetails, and grooves.

From scrap 1/2" plywood, cut a subbase to fit your router and project. Then rout a dado on the subbase bottom where the distance between the dado and the bit equals the spacing between the slots. Make the dado as wide as the bit profile at the workpiece surface. Attach a matching hardwood guide in the dado. For grooves deeper than 1/4", make progressively deeper cuts. For dovetails, rout first with a straight bit, and then finish with a dovetail bit for efficient chip removal.

Edge cuts, such as chamfers, and surface profiles, such as flutes, sometimes need to start and stop precisely and uniformly. That's the time to use simple, customized stopblocks to control where the profile starts and stops on each workpiece. Measure from the point where the cut will stop to the end of the workpiece, subtract the bearing radius, and cut the stopblock to that length from scrap at least 3/4" thick. Clamp the stopblock to the edge of the workpiece.

Small parts can drop through oversize router-table inserts or instantly tug fingers into the bit. See Dustin Guidry's comments on page one. To solve both problems, first drill a hole slightly larger than the bit diameter in a piece of 1/4" plywood, and clamp it to the router-table top for near-zero-

clearance support. Then keep your fingers safe by gripping the part with a handscrew. The jaws of these clamps can be angled to firmly grasp odd-size parts and hold them flat against the zero-clearance top.

Perching a router on a shelf edge to flush-trim solid-wood edges can turn ugly if your machine tips. Give it stability by clamping together the shelves on edge. Cut spacer blocks from 2x4 scrap and place them between the shelves at both ends. Then clamp the spacers and shelves together. (I clamped one of those clamps to my bench for added stability.) Then rout each edge with a flush-trim bit. If the router wobbles on the edges of the outside shelves, move those pieces to the inside, reclamp, and finish the routing.

A tipping router can ruin the edge of a finished project, so keep that base stable. If you need to round over the outside edges of an assembled box, tip the project on edge and use the front, back, and sides to support the router base. To rout inside round-overs with equal ease, clamp a 2x4 auxiliary support onto the outside surfaces.

The toughest part of freehand routing is easing the workpiece against the bit. To help you guide parts safely, make a starter pin from a hardwood, brass, or aluminum rod, and securely mount it to the table about 2" from the bit. Brace the workpiece against the starter pin; then slowly rotate it into the bit and bearing. Grip the workpiece close to the pin, and use the above technique for small parts.

Rounding over corners by hand-sanding produces uneven results. Instead, use a round-over bit with the radius you want for your corners. With the bit chucked on a table-mounted router, raise the bit height until it cuts a quarter-round profile in scrap without leaving a shoulder. Then position the fence flush with the bit pilot bearing. To prevent chip-out and keep the frame square to the fence and router-table top, clamp it to a 2x4 backer block.

Routing raised panel edges in one pass produces tear-out and it's risky. Spacers taped to a router-table fence let you rout gradually without constant adjustments. First mount a panel-raising bit onto a table-mounted router set to its lowest speed. Test-cut scrap the thickness of the panels to set the final profile.

Then make eight spacers from 1/8" or 3/16" plywood, and double-faced tape four on each side of the router-table fence. Rout all four edges of each panel, starting with the ends; then use a putty knife to pry off a spacer from each side. Repeat for each panel, removing pairs of spacers until the panel rides against the fence on the final pass. Barry Humphus plus some help from Wood Magazine as well.

August Meeting Location

John Marcon is an engineer and a very experienced and trained carver. His carving mostly includes religious items though his collection includes human heads, animals and many other items.

John will have a great guest speaker this month, Gary Breaux will show us all he knows about faux painting. If you want to make a wall or object look old or interesting Gary Beaux is the guy to show you.

To get there, start at Ryan Street and go West on Sale Road to Orchard Drive on your left. John's studio will be on the left at 512 Orchard Drive. Should you need further directions, contact him at 337-478-0646.

