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MAY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

The Lake Charles Woodworkers May meeting had the pleasure of watching a master woodturner at work. Bill Berry from Deer Park, Texas was our guest demonstrator once more and this time at Gary Rock's shop. Just like last year, the members were treated to a wonderful turning demonstration.

Bill showed us how to turn a small Christmas tree ornament from an old Christmas tree. Bill picks up trees that have groups of branches coming from the trunk in a small vertical area of 2-3 inches so the branch knots will show in the finished ornament. He saves the sections in a 5-6 inch section and discards the rest of the tree. The sections are saved for 2-3 years minimum to reduce the problems caused by sap that has not dried. I believe the blank he used for our demonstration was from 2001.

Bill started with the blank between centers and turned a tenon on one end so it could be gripped in the chuck jaws. He turns the blank into a cylinder approximately 1-1/2 to 2 inches (ping pong ball size) in diameter and marks the areas of the knots with a pencil with the lathe running to make a ring around the blank. This allows him to determine where most of the limb knots are so he can use the most highly figured area for the ornament.

Bill then turned a ball using the branch knots as the center, leaving about 3/4 inch on the chuck side to be turned away after shaping and hollowing. He then applied a thinned lacquer to stiffen the wood fibers so they could be turned without having a problem with torn wood. He then drilled a 1/4 inch hole through the center of the ball into the waste area held by the chuck, making sure to go all the way through the ball shape.

Bill began hollowing by opening the hole he was hollowing through up to 1/2 inch to make hollowing easier using homemade scraping tools made from allen wrenches and wall thickness gauges made from clothes hanger wire and brazing rods. He likes to turn to a 1/16 inch wall thickness to achieve a very light weight ornament. He then flattens the open end to make a good seat for the finial to be mounted later.

Bill reduces the size of the tenon and hollows the chuck end of the ball until he is satisfied with the shape and wall thickness, and then sands through the grits to 600 and then applies a finish coat of lacquer. He then parts the hollow ball off the blank stock being careful to make a flat surface on the end to later glue the other finial.

For our demonstration, Bill used African Blackwood for the finials. He said he likes to use exotic woods for finials because the wood is dense and strong enough to turn the very small sizes without breaking. He also explained the general shaping of finials inside an imaginary cone shape so the proportions will look well balanced.

Bill then turned each finial, one at a time, shaping, sanding, and finishing with lacquer, and drilling a 1/16 inch diameter hole in the top finial, before parting them off the lathe. He took particular care in shaping and sizing the tenons and areas that would seat against the hollow ball ends.

Since lacquer dries almost instantly, Bill was able to immediately glue the finials on each end of the hollow ball and glued a tiny eye that he cut off a #2 gold fish hook in the top finial using CA glue.

The result was a beautiful finished Christmas tree ornament turned from a Christmas tree ready to hang on a Christmas tree! What could be better than that? Thanks, Bill, for a great demonstration of turning and re-cycling.

Show & Tell is so much fun because we get to see the beautiful art and skill of our members and guests.

Continues on Page 2 . . .

Coming Up . . . Shop of Dick Trough on turning spirals plus deep hollowing techniques.

Saturday, June 9 at 9:00 a.m.



FIRST PAGE CONTINUES . . .

Pie Sonnier delighted everyone by showing off one of his recent automotive searies. This time a motorcycle looking more or less like a Harley.. I certainly like chicken



but Eltee Thibodeaux's scrollwork chicken would be a bit hard on the teeth. Eltee (Mr. Thibodeaux to his friends) also had done a miniture mailbox and Dachshund along with his credo: "Goodby Tension,

Hello Pension." Eltee's scrollwork was there with a puppy and cat clock.

Our host Gary Rock showed off some of his recent work including an ambrosia maple platter, a maple vessel with a walnut rim, and a spalted magnolia vase (lots of worm holes!). Bill Berry also showed a few of his tree ornaments as well.

We've posted an article on the website by Bill Berry on the steps for turning a tree ornament. See all of these and much more on our website at www.lcwoodworkers.com.

PLANE BLADE PROFILE

Not including molding or combination planes, there are four basic plane blade profiles: straight, round, crowned, and rounded corners. Which to use depends on the type of plane used and the planing task at hand.

Straight for jointer, rabbet or shoulder planes. Without a straight cutting edge when using a jointer or shoulder plane, it is almost impossible to get a satisfactory glue line. A straight edge is one of the easiest profiles for blade manufacturers to produce, but its a challenge for woodworkers to maintain without an investment in dedicated equipment. Nonetheless, a bit of practice, freshly trued stones and a good honing guide will usually produce a satisfactory edge.

A Round blade profile is desired when planing rough-sawn lumber by hand. Scrub planes are made specifically for this job, equipped as they are with a generously rounded blade profile. It is also quite practical to grind the required profile on a jack plane blade. A spare blade will typically cost much less than a dedicated plane.

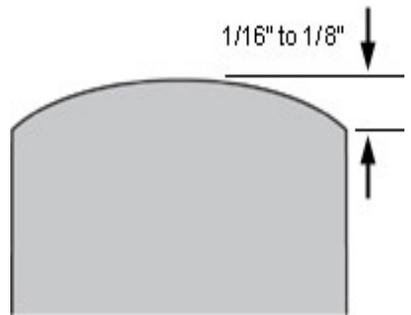
Crowned profiles may also be useful in a jack or fore plane when flattening a panel that is wider than the

blade. The goal is to conceal overlapping strokes on a wide surface by having the middle portion of the blade project from the sole while the corners are safely out of the way. The resultant surface will have a series of broad, shallow, parallel flutes, but the panel will appear to be flat to all but the most careful observer. The degree of crown will depend on the width of the blade. While a similar depth of the curve will be desired, the same radius is not suitable for both a #4-1/2 heavy smoother (with a 2-3/8 wide blade) and a #3 small smoother (with a 1-3/4 wide blade). Ideally, the height of the crown will be slightly more than the intended shaving thickness (e.g., for fine smoothing this may be as little as 0.0015). This profile is usually the easiest for a woodworker to produce since most stones that have not been freshly trued will naturally produce a crowned blade. When working on a hard, flat, oil stone, the crown can still be achieved by alternately applying more pressure on the corners.

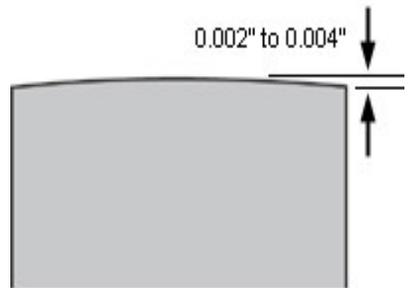
According to many the Rounded Corner is the best all-purpose profile for smoothing and jack planes because it ensures the maximum width of cut, allows overlapping strokes on a wide surface, and can still be used to dress the edge of a board for lamination. It is, however, a bit of a challenge to do well. All the requirements to sharpen a straight edge must be met, plus a smoothly rounded transition needs to be ground and honed on each corner or the edges of the blade will leave lines in the workpiece. There are no jigs sold for this process, so a bit of practice freehand grinding and honing is needed to get the profile just right. Edited from *Leevalley Tools*.



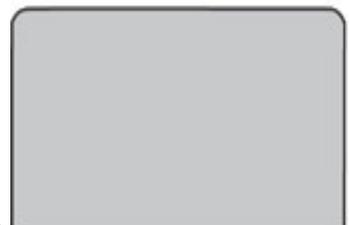
Straight.



Rounded.



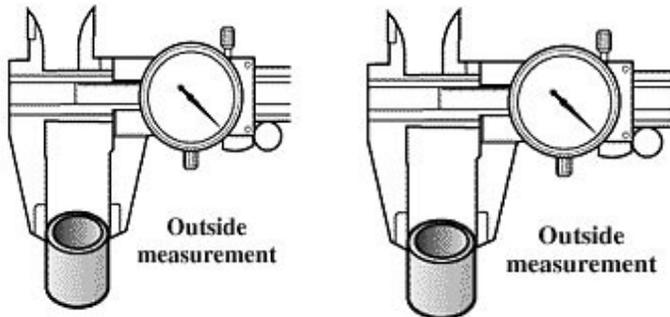
Crowned.



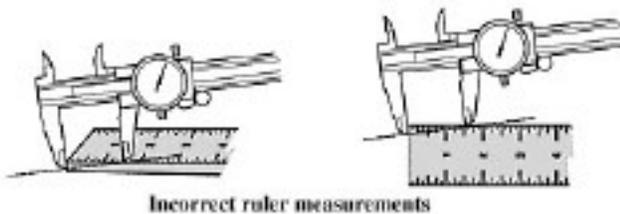
Rounded Corners.

USING A CALIPER

Most people use a caliper only for inside or outside measurements, but most calipers can also be used as a depth gauge. Users tend to forget that aspect.

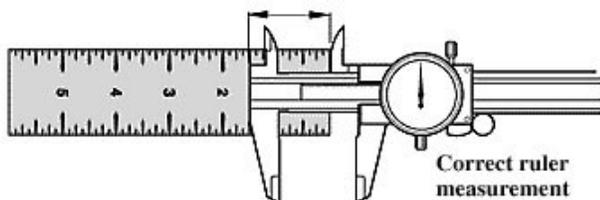


Moreover, there is one other useful feature of a caliper that most people do not even know exists; that is the ability to read distances from the end of the movable head to the end of the caliper body. This is useful whenever you have to measure from the end of something to a



point on its side, e.g., when checking the accuracy of a ruler. If you try to check end accuracy of a ruler using the inside of the jaws, you will always introduce a small error.

This may seem to be trouble free, but first, it is



difficult to adjust accurately and second, the more you extend one tip over the ruler end, the greater the error you will introduce. The reading will always be greater than the distance you want to measure.

You can do it all simpler by measuring from the tip of the movable head to the tip of the body. Standard dial or vernier calipers are built to facilitate this by having the movable head and the body machined flush when the jaws are closed. Edited from *Leevalley Tools*.

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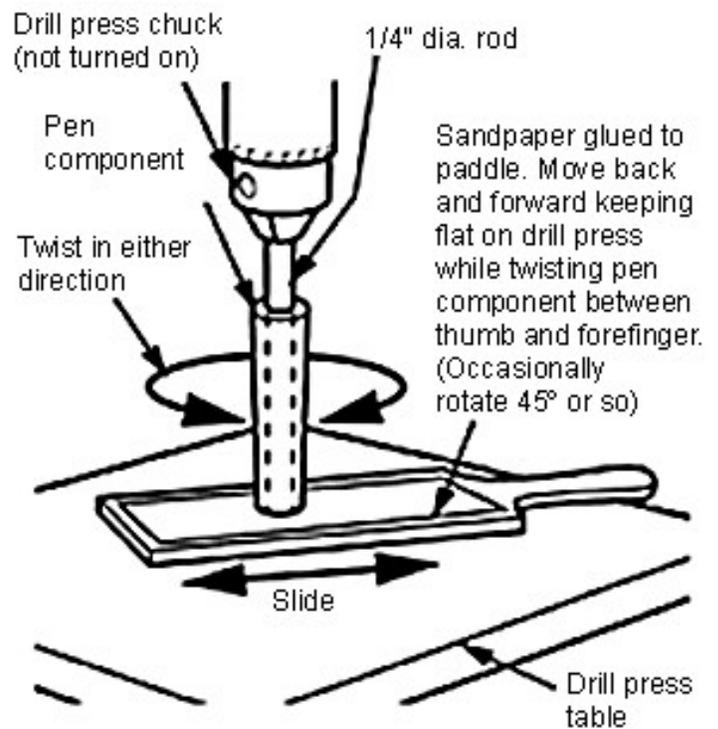
SQUARING ENDS ON A DRILL PRESS

Here is a technique developed for squaring the ends of various turned pen and pencil components.

The instruction sheets that come with pen and pencil kits suggest using a hole drilled in a block of wood to sand the blank square on its end. This works well with blanks which are parallel but not with tapered blanks. In addition, it required a different jig for each different diameter. Typically, what you are doing is using scraps and cutoffs from other projects for pen blanks. Often these are not machined square.

With two simple shop aids, and based on the fact that a drill press spindle is square to its table, you can get good results for all styles and sizes of blanks. A length of 1/4" dia. rod in the drill press chuck and a wooden paddle (such as a paint stick), with sandpaper bonded to the face is all that is required.

To use, mount the rod in the drill press chuck and slide the blank over the rod. Move the table to just clear the end of the rod and the sanding paddle. Then with the blank held between the thumb and the forefinger (drill press off), rotate the blank while pushing the paddle back and forward. This quickly produces a square end to the blank.



Edited from *Leevalley Tools*.