

Jeff Cormier, President
Dick Hopes, Treasurer

Officers and Director

Barry Humphus, Editor, Bubba Cheramie
George Kuffel, John Marcon, Chuck Middleton

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; Chuck Middleton: 625-3134; Gary Rock: 433-1679; Eltee Thibodeaux: 436-1997; Dick Trouth: 583-2683. Each has years of experience and knowledge.

May Meeting Highlights

Dick Hopes was our host this month. We met in his garage because he has a relatively small well layed out shop. Most power tools are on wheels so he can make room as needed. There was a huge collection of his scrowl work on display in the shop for all to admire.

Jeff Cormier reviewed the new door prize/raffle plan. It's purpose is to get you to make stuff. In brief, if you win and have brought a Show and Tell item you made, you get a bigger prize. Simple and effective.

Jeff discussed free-spool safety, reminding everyone to always let the power tool spin to a stop before getting anywhere near the sharp parts with your flesh parts. The weight of the blade or the spinning wheels of a band saw have a lot of cutting power even when the juice is off. I fact, I've nicked myself with a stationary table saw blade. Use a blade gaurd whenever possible.

Dick Trouth won the raffle - a very beautiful bowl turned and donated by Gary Rock. The bowl was of spalted



and worm-eaten pecan with a turquoise band around the top.

For Show and Tell, Bill Fey brought a very nice pine jewelry box with hand-made dovetails he made at a woodworking school in Waco, TX - Homestead Heritage. Bill described the school and if you are interested, see their web site at www.homesteadheritage.com. Speaking of hand-cut dovetails, <http://www.blocklayer.com/woodjoints/>

[dovetaileng.aspx](http://www.blocklayer.com/woodjoints/dovetaileng.aspx) web site has a Dovetail Template Generator where you enter dimensions of the the width, tail thinkness, socket thickness, pitch and number of tails you want. You print out the resulting template and fold it over the work piece. Just follow the cut lines.

Gary Rock brought us several bowls including one of mimosa, white oak with blackwood inlay and two vessels, one of cedar and the other of elm. Gary also discussed using a chatter tool. It will only work well on end grain when turning. At <http://www.cumberlandwoodturners.com/tips/chattertoolreallycheap.pdf> you can find how to make one really cheap.

Mr. Thibodeaux showed off some of his excellent scrowl saw work. This one was a tribute to Mother's Day. Jimmy Everett brought some recent canes including one made of a catus stalk. Jimmy comes up with the most interesting designs for his canes that I'm sure makes everyone who owns one proud.

Jeff Cormier couldn't bring his Show and Tell - it is just too heavy. Jeff talked about workbenches and their design and construction. He said he prefers them flat rather than the European style of having a back tray to hold tools. The downside of the tray is that it collects waste and you can't easily sit anything on it. It's best to have two shoulder vises - one in front and one on the end along with some dogs for clamping. Heavy and flat were Jeff's strongest recommendation. In addition to a shelf under the bench, Jeff suggested that drawers can be very usefull as they are convenient for tool storage as well as adding to the wieght of the unit.

Jeff also mentioned that there are several good books on building a bench such as "The Workbench Book: A Craftsman's Guide to Workbenches for Every Type of Woodworking" by Scott Landis (about \$25 new from Amazon.com). There are also some free plans on the Internet such as www.freeww.com/workbenches.html where you'll find lots of different syles. Also see: www.woodworking.org/WC/GArchive99/12_11bobhambench.html

Coming Up . . . Saturday, June 14, 9:00 at the shop of Dick Trouth on leg tapering.

Roy Lee LeBlanc

Just at press time, we learned of the passing of Roy Lee LeBlanc. Roy Lee was a wonderful turner, full of humor and always came to meetings and participated. He will ne missed.

Getting A Workbench

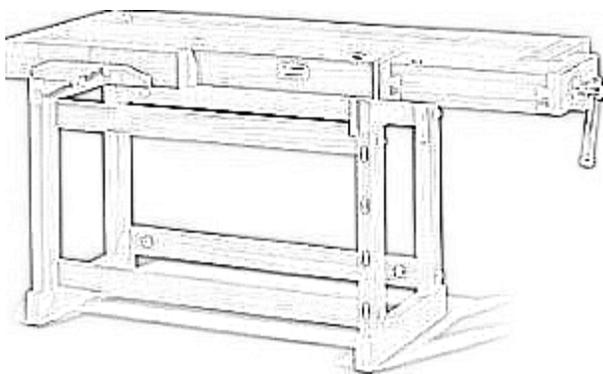
There are many kinds of workbenches that serve many a purpose. My first one was a steel frame kit and I bought a piece of 3/4" plywood as the top and another for the shelf beneath. It was great for the small space I had in my single car garage. I still have and use it - as a sharpening bench and general junk holder.

You can also purchase complete kits from a number of sources including Rockler, Woodcraft and others (\$500 - 1,500). At these places, you can also get front and end vises, bench dogs and other accessories. If you decide to build a bench, you can even order a maple or beech top complete with benchdog slots and mounting for your vises.

There are several different kinds of workbenches and you can divide the workbench market into a few groups. Woodworking workbenches, General garage workbenches and Portable workbenches.

It all starts with heavy duty woodworking workbenches like ones from Sjoeborg or Ulmia (but you should build your own). These benches, made out of beech or maple are certainly the most robust of its kind. Often, with benchtops up to 4 inch thick, they come with two different types of vises. The front vise, traditionally parallel pressing against the workbench side and the back (or end) vise can open (depending on the bench up to 10 inches) and presses against the grain part of the benchtop, giving it an extra strong force.

The standard workbenches for today's woodworker



are sized between 50 to 60 inches length. They often include cabinets for tool and machinery storage. Rockler offers workbenches two different versions: with top and trestle or just the workbench top and kit and plan to built your own bench base. This is a very nice alternative for anybody who wants

to get a robust benchtop made out of laminated maple, beech or birch and combines it with its own needs of a workbench base.

Apart from these typical woodworking workbenches, is a large variety of garage workbenches can be found on the market.

In today's workshops, these workbenches become more and more popular as auxiliary benches. Often rather cheap to buy, they serve as additional storage space as well. A good example for these garage workbenches is Northern tools AnySize Workbench Kit where you just build a 30-36 inch high workbench according to the workbench plans. Once you have got and cut the lumber parts, which are not included, this workbench can be built very fast at low cost.



The final group of workbenches are the portable ones. Everything useful for on the site workbenches and jigs. It all started with traditional saw horses with a board on it and now goes to very sophisticated clamping devices for heavy duty use. First, what comes in mind is Black & Decker's Workmate. Originally designed for DIY enthusiasts around the world, it got popular among kitchen cabinet makers and woodworkers for its ability to give an extra hand on the workplace. I have certainly used and indeed over-used a Workmate bench. For years it was my only workbench that stood for everything including holding down logs I cut for turning billets. Eventually, it got replaced by a good logging sawbuck that is light and portable. But they are very useful, light and work well in a portable environment.

The professional counterpart to any Workmate are Tritons superjaws. More like a clamping device with a tremendous clamping range from 0 - 35" it can also perfectly serve as a workbench. Just get two of them together and put a board on it - and the workbench is ready. As the clamping pressure comes from a foot pedal, it leaves your hands free while applying a pressure of up to 2440 lbs. Probably the highest pressure on any type of portable workbenches.

If you want to build your own workbench, consider a couple of things. One is it's hieght. Jeff suggested that you put your arms down and flex out your hands. Make the bench between the height of your hands and your belt. That way you can lean over and put lots of force down on the workbench as needed. Another thought is to build it even with your table saw so to provide extra support for large sheets.

See the Internet resources on Page 1 for more ideas.
Barry Humphus

Enclosed Membership List and Financial Report

If you are not on the Membership List and receive this, then shame on you. You need to send \$20 to Dick Hopes, 1139 Green Road, Lake Charles, LA 70611. Seriously, we need your help to keep the club running smoothly. Support the Lake Charles Woodworkers Club and support our sponsors that include Stines, Home Building Materials, and Diamond Lumber. At each place, you will find freindly, helpful and curteous people to make your project better. Note that the membership list will not be on the Web site for safety and security reasons.

The Legacy of What We Do

Woodworking in itself brings enjoyment to woodworkers through the processes of designing, working with wood, and being proud of our finished products. Every woodworker brings his or her own skills, motivators, and inspirations to this craft and certainly gets enjoyment through different parts of the process.

The finished products, whether they are pieces filled with more sentimental value than craftsmanship or pieces of timeless beauty, they are certain to be enjoyed for many years to come.

Looking at a family heirloom or other piece of antique furniture we can only imagine the history that the piece has gone through, from the workmanship of the person who built it, to the daily use the item has seen, to the use and abuse as well as treasuring and cherishing. A woodworking project becomes a legacy that will be handed down in our life times and more.

It is not just the wood creations that create a legacy today. The tools we use as well, tell a story about life, about passion, about dedication and about the artistry that we enjoy. Just by touching a tool held by a woodworker of yesterday, you can sense the time and commitment put into the craft through the use of that tool.

Our woodworking legacy continues. It not only gets passed on just through the projects and the tools, but by teaching the next generation the skills of our passion.

So this is what you should do. Find someone, especially someone younger than yourself and bring them or invite them to join the Lake Charles Woodworkers. Teach them or refer them to one of our masterful craftsmen to be taught about the joy of woodworking.

Our legacy goes back for eons and what ever we do today, it should and must continue for centuries more. Bring the children, bring the youg adults into this wonderful avocation. *Barry Humphus*

A Few Questions to Consider

This is a question that has been asked and debated several times over, but I think we need to ask it again and ask you to respond if you like.

There are many television shows on or about wood-working. For the most part, the presenters of these shows have got a a lot of tools. The best example for most of us is Norm Abrahm's 'The New Yankee Workshop.'

If you watch them, as I do, many of the tools are top of the line (particularly hand and power tools) but it also seems that many of them are just relatively average. For example, Norm uses a lot of Delta and Porter Cable equipment. While Mr. Abrams is a skilled craftsman, is it the clear that the equipment he uses in his show are rather ordinary and affordable. I realize that this is a TV show and the mistakes and goofs are left on the editing floor along with the shavings and sawdust.

But this brings me to the question for you Do you believe that it is the tools that make the woodworker, or the woodworker that takes advantage of what they have?

It seems to me that even if you buy relatively middle-of-the-road tools and take the time to set them up properly, they should be capable of producing good work. All of us have to make compromises for anything we do whether it be woodworking or someting else entirely.

I do understand there is a limit to this idea. Below a certain level of quality, you are just going to frustrate yourself and possibly end up building someting you'd rather put in the fireplace next winter than bring to Show and Tell.

I guess what I'm getting at is this: are we doomed to average-at-best work if you only buy average tools? I realize that there is a learning curve and both experience and practice count for an awful lot. But the level of skill I see in terms of the items memebtrs bring or photos they show at nearly every meeting, is almost overwhelming. I guess what I'm saying is this: there is a great deal of talent among our members, whether they happen to bring a Show and Tell item or not. We have members with literally decades of woodworking experience but we also have members with decades of other experience, all of which contribute to what we do.

So I am just curious about what you all think. I'm hoping that some of you will chime in on this discussion and enlighten the rest of us. I'm thinking that perhaps if I should spend big money on tools and make sure my tools are dead on accurat, perhaps then it won't matter that my projects are rather average. Please respond and contribute to this discussion. *Barry Humphus*.