

John Griffith, President
Patrick LaPoint Treasurer

Officers and Directors

Barry Humphus, Editor, Eltee Thibodeaux
Daren Hood, John Marcon, Rob Richard

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; John Marcon: 478-0646; Eltee Thibodeaux: 436-1997; Dick Trough: 583-2683. Each have years of experience and knowledge.

September Meeting Highlights

We met at the wonderful Stines in Lake Charles. Everyone appreciates their continued support for the LCWW. Always tell the Stines folks that as you check out after the meeting.

We began this month with the reminder of router safety. I love my several routers and use them from time to time but I'm always aware that these great machines have to be treated with much respect. Several members suggested that you always use 1/2 inch shaft bits or larger (if you have such a router). While some consumer routers do not have this capability, the next one you purchase should.

The great advantage of a 1/2 inch shaft bit is the holding power of the shaft. A 1/4 inch shaft is at least 50 percent smaller than a 1/2 inch shaft and thus your router has 50 percent more grab on the shaft with a 1/2 inch. This basically the amount of surface area that the collet can grab onto.

Another factor is mounting the bit whether a 1/4 or 1/2 inch bit shaft. The ideal process is to bottom the shaft in the collet and then raise it 1/16th inch or so before you turn it down. This gives the shaft a bit of play for expansion due to the heat build-up as the bit plows through material. Should you bottom the shaft, it can expand to the point where it can get free of the collet and literally blow out of the collet into your work or you hand or face.

This what happened to a friend and he lost an eye. He was using a router to hollow out a large bowl and did not seat the bit properly.

Another caution is to route in the proper direction and this is from left to right because of the direction the bit turns. If you are using a large bit, run your router at a slower speed should it have a speed control. If your router does not have this feature (like mine), you can purchase a router speed control unit. These vary in price (and quality) from \$18 to \$45 from various sources.

John Marcon mentioned that Veritas (veritastools.com) sells a great carver bench. They are very adjustable and really great if you do a lot of carving as it adjusts to any angle for carving with lots of hold-down capabilities. The down-side is the cost. A full unit including the top runs as much as \$1,200.

Another mention for safety is to never wear loose clothing, have long hair secured and jewelry removed when using any power tool.

For Show and Tell, Mr. Eltee Thibodeaux started us off with a nicely designed clamp extender. Ray Kibodeaux showed his tire checker which looked suspiciously like a head knocker. But the purpose is to use it to tap tires for sound to determine if they are up to pressure. It was turned from pecan. Ray also showed an extended shoe horn made of water oak.

Patrick LaPoint brought us a very nice jewelry box, flocked inside made of mahogany and pine with a spray laquer finish. George Carr did a chip carved box and cross of nice design.

George Carr also won the S&T prize of a Stine's gift card. John Griffith will be away this next meeting as he has a family event away so Patrick and Barry will conduct the meeting in October. Please excuse what Barry makes in terms of the coffee!

Next Up . . . October 13 at 9:00 A.M. at the Stines Store on Nelson Road in Lake Charles in their meeting room.

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Element Fire Extinguisher

We all have (or should have) several fire extinguishers. For example, I have two in my home, one in my shop and one in my car. The two in my home and one in the shop are 5 pound units. The one in the car is a 2-1/2 pounder. At best, a 5 pound extinguisher has a useful fire extinguishing time of about 11 seconds. So once you engage the unit to fight a fire, you have 11 or so seconds of fire fighting capacity. A 2-1/2 pound unit has about 6 to 8 seconds of capacity.

These units are basically a pressure vessel that contain a fire retardant chemical that when the chemical reacts with high heat, produces carbon dioxide and other gasses to remove or limit the amount of oxygen feeding the fire.

Once you have triggered one of these, even for a tiny amount of time, it must be serviced and refilled or thrown out because the seals are compromised. In fact, the seals break down over time and the unit must be serviced or thrown out. Also, there have been major national recalls (Kidde brands) of plastic head extinguishers totaling over 47 million units. The only up-side is that these units are relatively cheap (\$40 - \$60 for a 5 pounder).

The down-side is that they are relatively heavy and bulky. A 5-pound unit actually weights 7 or more pounds. A 10 pounder weighs up to 15 pounds. They also take up lots of space, particularly in a vehicle where they can roll around or get stuck under a seat or even roll up under your brake pedal. If you discharge one of these in a kitchen, for example, you may have put out a fire, but you have also created a giant mess in your kitchen. Should you release one of these in an engine compartment, it is a much worse mess. Cleaning out an engine compartment after using one of these units is a major service job that only a professional shop can do effectively.

A company called Element is now selling a completely new way to fight small fires that will likely revolutionize extinguisher use. The unit is a one time use,



weights 10 ounces (vs 7 lbs), lasts 50 seconds (compared to 11 seconds with a conventional unit) and is ten times smaller than a conventional extinguisher.

The discharge is a gas that is not toxic and leaves no residue. In other words, it does not deplete the air that you may be breathing and there is no cleanup after discharge.

The Element Fire Extinguisher comes in three sizes: E25, E50 and E100. The E25 is 12 inches long and 1.2

inches in diameter. It weighs 8 ounces. It has a discharge time of 30 seconds. The E50 is the same size but discharges for 50 seconds and it very suitable for car, kitchen fires or in your shop. All units are ABC units meaning that they can control trash and wood fires, liquids such as volitals (oils and fuels) and electrical fires.

In fact, the E50 is their most popular model. The E100 is for industrial use and discharges for 100 seconds.

The big tradeoff is the cost. Currently, the E50 costs \$60 and the E100 is \$120. While this may seem a great deal of cost, consider what they do for the money. They are small, have very extended discharge, are not harming your enviroment in terms of the trash that conventional units do and are relatively inexpensive and of course safe and easy to use. The web site is www.elementfire.com. Currently, these units seem to be available only at the elementfire.com.

Unlike traditional dry chemical fire extinguishers that make a huge mess of corrosive dust, the Element discharges a totally clean and non-toxic fire fighting gas that leaves no residue behind.

Traditional extinguishers use dangerous compressed gas cylinders, mechanical levers, and gauges that need regular maintenance and inspection. By using no moving parts and a solid chemical charge, Element never needs servicing and is always ready to fight fires. In other words, you do not have to check the unit periodically, it is not subject to failure due to service life, humidity, etc.

Element works by fighting fires on the molecular level. Its gas chemically interrupts the chain of combustion effectively extinguishing a fire without making any mess and without removing surrounding oxygen. This gas attaches itself to the oxygen surrounding the fire robbing its ability to combust. The goal is therefore to use the gas coming out the Element extinguisher to create a 'cloud of containment' around a fire. Creating a cloud that prevents any oxygen from getting to the fire is essential and is the same strategy that should also be used with a Halon/Halotron or CO2 extinguisher with no reduction of oxygen as the CO2 and Halon units do.

The use of these units is simple. Remove the head cap and the bottom cap. Strike bottom cap on the surface of the the top. This works very much like a standard flare Then point the unit toward the fire. The gas comes out of the unit and supresses the fire by chemically attaching itself to the oxygen surrounding the fire robbing its ability to combust. The best technique is to take advantage of the long discharge time offered by the Element extinguisher and to approach a fire from a moderate distance progressively getting closer to its source. This will contain the fire and allow the gas the ability to work..Barry Humphus.

Precision Tools -- Continued

In a past Newsletter, we have discussed using precision measuring tools for woodworking. In this series, I've covered tools for standardization, tools for measuring and tools for precision. Now, it's time to bring it all together with a few recommendations for different kinds of woodworking.

How much accuracy you need depends on the kind of woodworking that you do. Remember that for hundreds of years, woodworkers got away with few or no measuring tools, yet still produced amazingly accurate work. How? It's because they relied on other tools like story sticks, setup pieces, and patterns and used them repeatedly and wisely. Using standards or story sticks is still a great method for producing accurate work and avoiding mistakes. But, some kind of measurement is where all modern projects start. The secret of accuracy is starting with high precision and sticking with it all the way through.

Once you cross the line of producing more than one of something in your shop — say four legs for a stool, a run of six dining chairs or four mirrors for gifts, you'll depend even more on your measuring instruments. To avoid measuring mistakes caused by using more than one measuring device — whether it's a ruler plus a measuring tape, all your measuring tools have to agree. The way to do that is to have a set of high-quality measuring tools to you use as reference standards to test all the other measuring tools in your shop against. We have discussed this at length previously.

With a focus on hand tools, the measuring tools you need can be minimal, but there's still a need for precision. A high-quality combination square, such as a 12" Starrett will cost from \$100 - \$130 depending on finish choices, is a lifetime tool and an investment in quality woodworking. Besides being accurate, it's a rugged tool that will last. A tool of this caliber is not just a ruler and adjustable square, it's also your shop standard for testing all your other measuring tools and setting up your fixed power tools. I bought mine in 1997 and it's still going strong. I use the smaller version — the Starrett 6" combination square all day long and keep it handy in my shop. Some woodworkers prefer the smaller 4" Starrett double square. PEC Tools is a good lower cost alternative for combination squares.

It's always good to have at least one very accurate ruler around. Don't assume that the cheap ruler you bought at a home center is accurate. Placed next to a Starrett, you'll be shocked at the difference. Ruler size depends on your needs. I have rules ranging from 6" to 72" in my shop and use them all, but the ones I use most often are 6", 12" and 24" long. A small 6" stainless model that won't bend that

easily fits in a pencil pocket in a shop apron is very handy. If you have a 12" combination square, you've got a great 12" ruler right there. When it comes to longer rules, an 18" - 36" Starrett or PEC Tools are first on my list. Pro tip: Thick, high-quality rules are expensive. If you're on a tight budget, look for used or cosmetic blemishes online.

For tapes, refer to my earlier post on testing each tape before you buy. It's important that every tape in your shop matches your precision rules, otherwise, mistakes will happen. Size and format of tape measures depend on your needs and preferences. As an occasional furniture maker, I've found a 16' x 3/4" is small enough in bulk to not be a burden, but long enough in length to check any hardwood lumber I purchase from a supplier. I've become a big fan of Tajima tape measures. Consistent quality and high accuracy are Tajima trademarks. I use the 1" wide x 16'/5M model because for current work, I need imperial/metric combination tape. They make several other models that are sure to fit your needs.

For try squares, many woodworkers like the brass and wood models you see at woodworking stores. Those are beautiful and great to use. Just make sure you test any square you buy for squareness against your standard Starrett, or other trusted combination square. Though I got lucky with my first cheap square purchased over 20 years ago, I have yet to have a student show up a class with an accurate famous brand square purchased from a home center. Like tape measures, always test before you buy. I bought a folding Swedish Nobex folding model years ago on a whim and they've become a daily choice.

Everything recommended for the hand tool woodworker applies with the additions of a quality digital or dial caliper and a dial indicator. Calipers are the only way to accurately measure board thicknesses as they come out of a planer or for checking widths when ripping boards on a table saw. They are also great for fine-tuning mortise and tenons. In terms of brands, the big names are Mitutoyo and Brown and Sharpe are consistently excellent, but I've found the latest digital models from Clockwise and iGauging to be just as accurate, well made and less expensive. Like the famous brands, each instrument is individually tested for accuracy.

I've also made great use of digital height gauges for setting up a table saw and router cuts. These are finally inexpensive and save a lot of time when fine-tuning a cut or router setup. Also, the digital angle gauges or protractors really help when it comes to finding or fine-tuning an angle cut.

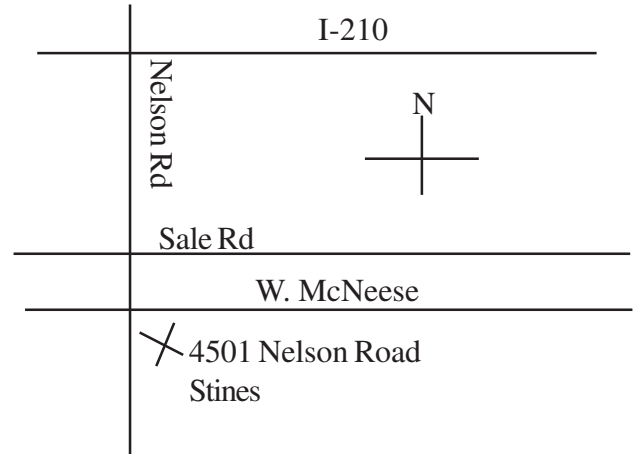
Choose and use accurate measuring tools. They will serve you well. Barry Humphus.

October Meeting Location

We have the wonderful opportunity to meet at the Stines Lake Charles location at 4501 Nelson Road. Please enter the store and go to the back left in the store to the meeting room.

To get there go South on Nelson Road in Lake Charles going from I-10 or I-210 and turn into the parking lot. Go to the back of the main entrance to the very back to the meeting room to find us.

Please take an opportunity to explore Stines before you leave to find the items for your shop or home that you may need. As always, thank the folks at Stines as you check out.



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