Lake Charles **Woodworkers Club, Inc.** January 2006

Bubba Cheramie, President
Dick Hopes, Sec. / Treasurer

Officers and Directors

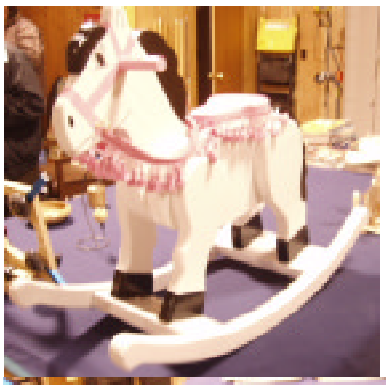
Barry Humphus, Editor, Brent Evans
George Kuffel, John Marcon, Chuck Middleton

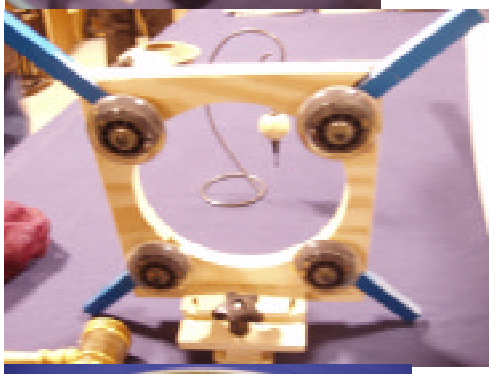
DECEMBER MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Once again, our Holiday meeting was held at the wonderful shop of Gail and Mickey Hart. Their continued hospitality is always appretiated by everyone. The 50 x 40 foot shop is always fun to explore to see what new power tools Gail and Mickey have added.

Several folks brought great eats this year and of course, we had Bubba's hot donuts.

There were many show and tell items this meeting. Included was a good looking pedistle table by Jim Anderson. Pie Sonnier brought one of his late creations: a farm tractor complete with a bush hog. Pie said the hardest thing to build was the PTO universal joint. Mr. Thibodeaux (Eltee to his friends) created a pyro-windmill toy powered by candles. He said you have to get the blades very well balenced or the system won't turn correctly (and you could start a fire!).





Unfortunately, I didn't get the name of the member who brought a good-looking child's rocking horse — I hope they let me know so I can post it on the website.

Bubba Cheramie created a steady-rest jig for his lathe. The guide wheels are from an in-line roller skate. If you don't want to use the wheels off of your set, you can get them at the Academy sporting goods store. A garage sale is also a good source and they are generally very cheap.

Gary Rock showed off a small turned box, a beautiful maple bowl and another bowl of juniper. Gary also had a display of some of his tree orniments.

Some members updated us on their Rita experiences and most members are back in their homes if they had to leave because of damage including John Marcon, Robin Richard, Eltee Thibodeaux and others. We don't have the status of Lee Frazier's home which lost its roof.

We learned some sad news that long time member Norman (Nemo) Robinson has passed away this past Fall. The LCWW held their annual holiday meeting at his shop for many years in a row and it was always a delight to see his latest work. Nemo was primarily a turner and specialized in pens. He must have made a thousand of them over the years. Part of his shop was devoted to displaying samples of his work including craft work by Mrs. Robinson. Nemo will be missed.

If you've got to rebuild your fence after Rita, you should see the article later in this issue. It is derrived from one I got from Millard Lumber several years ago but includes some of my own experiences.

Chuck Middleton reported that his new shop project is slowly coming. Most of the electrical work is done and some of the dry wall has been completed.

George Kuffel has used the Rita damage to his shop to make an addition. The shop originally had a covered storage area at the back. He has had this enclosed and is adding additional power and lighting. This will add about 200 square feet to an already nice sized work area.

Our annual BBQ is still on, so don't throw away those tickets. In the next few weeks, the board will discuss when it will be held. We don't yet know the post-Rita status of the PPG Family Center where we've had our previous BBQs, but Robin Richard said he will find out and report when or if it will be available.

Coming Up . . . Saturday, January 14 at 9:00 a.m. at the neat shop of Theresa and Leonard Wilfret.

NEW BATTERY LIFE

You grab your battery-powered drill to run the last few screws down and it grinds to a halt half way throught the job. Poping off the nearly dead battery and grabing its replacement (if you have one that's charged), you finish the job, but just barely. You are experiencing what most of us have who regularly use battery power for everything from shop tools to iPods: the batteries just don't last long enough. Lots of charging cycles, cold weather and how they are used ultimately contribute to complete failure (as one of my batteries did recently). And, as Leonard Wilfret pointed out a few months ago, a rechargable battery typically looses 1% of its charge each day.

The technical challenges for battery makers are daunting. Most folks have little understanding of the complex and volatile chemistry that occurs in their batteries each time they videotape the grandkids or use their power drill. Can you imagine a chemical plant that has to operate in a closed condition and send energy forward and backward 500 times? And you can't send anybody in to do maintenance. Our members who operate chemical plants would laugh, but that's what we do with a rechargeable cell every day.

Much of the research by battery manufacturers is centered on improving the lithium ion battery (L-I), which has revolutionized the electronics and power tool industries since it was widely adopted in the mid-1990s. Found in most mobile gear today, L-I batteries are energy dense, smaller and lighter than nickel-based batteries, but are often more expensive.

They work by mixing lithium cobaltate at the positive terminal and graphite at the negative. The two materials produce a lot of energy when they react with each other. Some of the scientists involved believe the L-I has maxed out as a power source. And some companies are already coming up with new materials to replace cobaltate and graphite.

Sony Corp. and Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., (Panasonic to you and me), each announced in early 2005 that they had developed longer-lasting L-I batteries by tweaking the chemical equation. Both companies say their batteries can boost the life of a battery by up to 30 percent, but these claims are questioned by most analysts.

Sony says it replaced graphite with a mixture of tin, cobalt, and carbon for its "hybrid" battery, which is being rolled out exclusively in the company's new Handycam camcorders. The new material allows the batteries to be discharged down to a lower voltage, enabling users to get more runtime from their devices.

Designed to power laptops, cell phones and other mobile electronics, Panasonic's first generation battery is scheduled to hit store shelves in April, 2006.

A123Systems, developer of a new generation of L-I batteries, unveiled its technology back in November and announced that it is delivering batteries with unprecedented power, safety, and life as compared to conventional lithium technology. A123Systems' first battery is now in production and being shipped to Black & Decker. It will be first utilized by Black & Decker's DeWalt brand.

A123Systems' battery technology claims up to 10X longer life, 5X power gains and dramatically faster charge time over conventional high power battery technology. A123Systems' batteries use proprietary nanoscale electrode technology built on research at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and exclusively licensed from MIT.

A123Systems' initial family of batteries is targeted at applications that require high power, high levels of safety, and longer life. These include power tools, advanced medical devices, hybrid electric vehicles, mobility products such as electric scooters, robotics, and consumer electronics.

DeWalt is using the battery in a heavy-duty 36-volt power tool platform. The 36-volt power tools will provide users with increased levels of power and runtime, at a similar or less weight than their corded counterparts. Available later this year, the new tool line was designed from the ground up to ensure durability and reliability and to make optimum use of the increased power available from A123's battery technology. The line will include a hammer drill, reciprocating saw, circular saw, impact wrench, rotary hammer, jigsaw, flashlight and combo kits.

Their first product is supposed to pack up to five times the power density of current rechargeable batteries. In addition, the battery will have the ability to recharge to 90% of its capacity in five minutes. Unlike conventional L-I batteries, the new batteries employ thermally stable, non-combustible active materials, enabling a safer cell and allowing cost reductions such as the elimination of unnecessary battery pack components.

With up to 10X improvement in life over existing rechargeable batteries, the batteries reportedly deliver thousands of cycles (not a few hundred) at high rates. Cycles refer to the number of times a battery can be charged and discharged before it no longer has any power remaining.

So expect to start seeing new DeWalt advertising promoting their new line of battery powered tools in the next few months. And expect to see those new higher prices as well. *Barry Humphus*.

A POST-RITA FENCE POST

Common to many of us who went through Hurricane Rita is rebuilding the fences around our homes. If your insurance paid enough, you can simply get a contractor to replace it, but if you're like me, the insurance wasn't enough.

As a rule, you should set fence posts about 6' to 8' apart. The spacing of the posts depends on the type of fence you build, the terrain, the purpose of the fence, and other such factors. First you set the corners or end posts. Then stretch a line from each corner or end post to align all the posts in between. Drive a stake every 6' to 8' at the exact position where the post hole is to be dug. Be certain to take the time to measure and position the posts accurately. The appearance and the structural strength of your fence depends a great deal on the positioning of the fence posts.

Set all wood fence posts with about 1/3 of their total length buried in the ground. For example, if you have 8 foot posts, dig your hole about 2-1/2 feet deep. This is especially important on corner posts and any posts that will carry heavy weight or withstand high wind pressure.

You can anchor the posts more firmly by making the holes slightly larger at the bottom than at the top. Place a large stone, half a brick or a shovel full of gravel in the bottom of each hole. This provides drainage to avoid excessive moisture at the base of each post if you are using wooden posts. This is not needed if you are using steel pipe posts.

Be sure the posts are in an exact, upright position. You can check the alignment of each post with a regular level. You can also check the alignment of the posts in one direction by sighting from one end of the row of posts to the other.

If you use a quick-set concrete (which I recommend), you won't need to brace each post with stakes after it is properly aligned as the concrete will set in about 20 minutes. When the post is properly aligned, tamp it thoroughly to pack the dirt (if used) around the base of the post. Be sure you do not alter the alignment of the post during the tamping process.

When the post is firmly in position, build a mound around it to help eliminate water standing at the post base. Slope the concrete slightly away from the post and round it off with a trowel. Tamp the concrete lightly to eliminate any air bubbles left in the mixture that can act as water pockets. You could use the spoils from digging the hole to do this as well.

Allow the posts to stand a day and settle firmly in position before adding the fence. The heads of posts should be rounded, capped or slanted to help eliminate accumulating water, which can cause rotting. This is well-worth the effort since it allows the posts to last.

Attach a top and bottom rail to the fence posts. There are three basic ways to do this.

The top rail should be nailed or screwed near the top of the post. This is an ideal installation for many types of fencing structures. The top rail can always be joined to another rail in the center of a post this way. I used metal brackets to butt join the rails where needed. This is simple and reliable. But you can use a half lap joint to do the same thing if you don't want to use brackets.

If the rail is added on the body of the post rather than at the top, attach it with a groove, a wood block or a metal bracket. You attach the bottom rail near the bottom of the post in the same way.

The lap joint is one of the easiest to use. The grooved joint does basically the same job, but the rail is grooved into the post rather than being nailed to the post surface.

Take time to measure from the top rail to be sure the bottom rail on each is in perfect alignment. After you have measured one post, cut a measuring stick to prevent having to make an actual measurement on each post. The stick can be used to apply the same measurement to each post.

Try to keep the bottom rail of any fence at least 2" above the ground. This helps eliminate the problem of decay and makes it easier to trim grass around the base of the fence. The same applies to the fencing material as well if it is wood. Keep the bottom of the fence material at least 1 inch above the ground.

When you install the fence pickets, there are a couple of choices to make depending on the material. If it is a vinyl product, you have to follow the manuafturer's recommendation and may need special fasteners or clips. If the material is wood, you can nail it or screw it.

Nailing can be hard on your wrist and elbows unless you have access to a power nail gun. In general, you need to use a two inch nail, preferably a zinc coated ring-shank nail. If the wood is more than four inches wide, you need to use two nails at the top and two at the bottom.

If you use screws, you can get away with one screw at the top and bottom. Use a coated 'deck' screw of about 1-5/8 inches for one inch thick material. You could also use course threaded dry wall screws as they are less expensive. I've found that they last just as well as only the head is exposed. Using screws also means that they are easy to remove should you need to replace one or more slats in the fence. *Edited by Barry Humphus from Millard Lumber.*

Theresa and Leonard Wilfret will be our hosts this month at their neat shop. Bring some of your latest work or photos and tell us what neat new tools you got.

To get there, take Sale Road west past Holley Hill. Turn left (south) off Sale onto East Jevon Lane. Take the first right onto West Jevon Lane. Their home is at 4207 West Jevon Lane about half way down the block on the left. Call them at 478-0952 if you need further directions.

Keep the money rolling in! Now's the time to send in your 2006 dues for the Lake Charles Woodworkers Club. To continue to receive this great Newsletter and events, send your $20 to Dick Hopes, Treasurer, 1139 Green Road, Lake Charles, LA 70611.

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