

Southwest Louisiana Woodworkers Club March 2021

Bill Fey, President
Patrick LaPoint Treasurer

Officers and Directors

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

Mentoring Program - If you have a project, a problem in any woodworking area, these members have volunteered to help. Give them a call. Frank Tartarmella 802-8989; John Marcon: 478-0646; Eltee Thibodeaux: 436-1997; Ray Keboeaux: 583-2378. Each have years of experience and knowledge.

We Are Back!

Due to the pandemic, the SWLaWW have not met for about a year. This month, we are back in business with a face to face meeting in the car port of Treasurer Patrick LaPoint. Given our average ages, it is likely that you have gotten at least one of the COVID-19 vaccines. If not, please bring and wear a mask at the meeting. You likely need to wear one in any case so we will not infect another member.

While we have all struggled through two hurricanes and a hard freeze, we certainly hope you all are on your way to recovery. Progress has been made at my home but we are still missing three 6' x 6' peices of glass plus a sliding glass door and wood flooring in some rooms. We hope to have this resolved by the anniverary of Laura and Delta. The contractors are working (at last!).

Please bring any work (or photos) that you have done during the pandemic to the meeting. We are all looking forward to what you do as a woodworker and the beatiful art that you create. My shop is still down with no power or lights. This should get better during the comming weeks.

Lightweight, Portable and Folding Chair

Several years ago, my dear freind, the late Geoge Kuffel, showed me a chair he had built from a plan. It is called a Dock Chair and I suppose that the chair was designed to go on ships as it is simple to build and can be convenient to fold away. In any case, I decided to build some. I ended up building four of them, two for my patio and two for my friends in Houston for their patio area.

I've always disliked the Adirondack chair and have never understood its popularity. I find it uncomfortable because the human frame does not bend at right angles and also, because it neither folds nor stacks, it's an awkward item to move and difficult to store.

What I like to call my "dock chair" requires no special hardware and can be made with practically any wood, or combination of woods, in just a few hours. Anyone reasonably handy can make a pair of them in a weekend.

I made the first version with pine and red oak slats fastened with steel screws. I modified the original curves to make it lighter and more elegant and this version is shown in

the drawing. I used cedar for my newer version (basically fence slats purchased at Home Depot), so the chair needs no finish and can be left out in the weather – rain or shine – and it will just turn an agreeable shade of grey. I didn't bother to make cushions for this chair but it would be no great matter to do so. I could use canvas – natural or synthetic – for the cover and stuff it with kapok. It would then double as a life raft if I fell off the dock!

About all you need for this project is a band saw (or jigsaw), a low-angle block plane, a drill and a spokeshave. For materials you won't do better than spruce for the frame because it combines light weight with flexible strength. Spruce does not weather well so the wood should be sealed with several coats of marine varnish or, for a really low-maintenance finish, paint. You could also make the chair in teak or mahogany. Either would weather well, but it would be much more expensive and less portable because of the additional weight.

The slats are screwed to the frame with stainless steel or bronze screws. Leave the heads exposed or plug the holes with wooden bungs I did not do the bungs.



You will have to tape several pieces of paper together to get the full-size image and may find some minor discontinuities – flat spots and abrupt changes in curvature. Rather than build these into the chair, use a flexible batten, spring it into the right shape and redraw the curves with a felt-tipped pen. Continues next page.

Dock Chair continues

Use these full-size templates to mark out the frames on your stock, nesting them if possible, and taking advantage of any natural curvature or “sweep” in the grain. If the stock is not wide enough, glue up two or more pieces until you have the width needed.

One of the clever features of this design is that the grain lines are almost straight at the point where the frames cross and the maximum bending stress occurs.

While my band saw in my workshop is down, I cut out each frame with a jigsaw then dressed the inside and outside curves with a spokeshave. This is a good time to do all the sanding and finishing, being sure to take the sharp edge off any corner with a sanding block. Give the frames a coat of primer (or varnish if using a clear finish), set them aside, and cut out the seat and back slats.

To maintain straight grain at the intersection, you may have to add width to your frame stock

It's well worth the extra trouble to plane a small flat on the convex side of the frame where a slat lands. You can also plane a very slight round on the inside of each slat before fastening it to the concave side of the frames. Otherwise you are likely to see unsightly gaps when looking at the chair from the side. Finish-sand the slats and seal them with paint or varnish as before.

All is fair. The spokeshave is ideal for removing saw marks and refining the curves. I find it easier to shape the outside before cutting the inside curve.

If you plan to leave your chair out in the weather, leave at least a 1/4” gap between slats so water can drain. Otherwise, 1/8” is sufficient. Make up some 1/4” or 1/8” spacers to position the slats so the gaps are consistent for both seat and back, from top to bottom.

Start with material 3" wide for the slats. Depending on the gap between slats, and how much material you removed when shaping the frames, you may need to make individual slats slightly smaller. The top slat on the back is flush with the end of the frame.

Plane a bevel on the edge to meet the curved frame end at an attractive angle. Judge this angle by eye based on the drawing and photos. Some of the other slats may benefit from an angled edge to maintain a consistent gap between them.

Start at the top and fit and mark each slat before attaching any of them. The last slat above the seat will be about 1/2” narrower than the others. Start fitting the seat slats with the locking slat C in the drawing and work toward the end. The last slat can overhang the edge 1/4” to 1/2“, and the chair will be more comfortable if the edge is planed to a radius.

Always set wooden bungs with paint or varnish, not glue, so they can be removed to refasten the chair if that ever becomes necessary. If you are planning to use a clear finish be sure to put a drop of sealer (or marine bedding compound) in the pilot hole before driving the screw. Otherwise you are likely to get an unsightly ring around the fastener if the chair is left out in the weather.

The link for the plan is at <https://cdn.popularwoodworking.com/wp-content/uploads/0906Deck.pdf>. Go for it as this a great project for all of us.

A Complete Shop With Hand Tools

Setting up a hand-tool-oriented shop is a fraction of the investment of setting up a power tool shop. For the price of one large quality piece of power machinery, you can buy all of the hand tools you need to build things – from rough lumber all the way to assembly and final surface finishing. And that is if you are buying the best-quality new tools available.

To do the same work with power tools, you need three to four machines, a bunch of small powered hand tools, plus good dust collection to deal with all the small particles. On top of that, you need the space to put everything.

For the home woodworker, hand tools can be just as fast as power tools. Woodworking as a craft was fully formed long before the advent of machinery and electricity, and people did not work slowly or inefficiently.

It may take some time to acquire the skills to be proficient with hand tools, but it is actually easier to get started with them than it is with machines. As long as your tools are sharp they will give you results, and the more you use them the better you will become at controlling them.

One reason people have turned so readily to power tools is that they are convinced it's much easier to learn how to set up a machine to do a task that it can then repeat over and over than it is to learn the hand skills to be proficient at that same task. Nothing could be further from the truth – even your earliest attempts with a hand tool will give you better results than the first attempts to do the same thing with machines. This comes at a much lower initial cost.

The list of hand tools you need for efficient work is nowhere near as daunting as you might think. As you build your kit, it is important to understand that the individual tools do not matter as much – the key is that you have the right group of tools.

The tools you get to fill out this group are completely dependent on which ones work best for you, and there may be specialty tools such as scrapers, rasps or moulding planes that you'll want to acquire as the need arises.

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Hand Tools continues

Plus, you'll need some measuring and marking tools for layout. I suggest a couple of combination squares – at least a 12" and 6" (it's also nice to have a 2" or 4" one), and an awl. A bevel gauge and protractor will let you work with angles

Two sets of dividers, and a compass allow for curves, and also let you lay out proportions and transfer points onto your piece. Two marking gauges allow you to transfer multiple dimensions without needing to measure. With a folding rule and tape measure, you can take specific measurements. The blade from your 12" combo square can be a straight-edge as needed.

Unless you only use all-wood joinery such as mortise and tenons or dovetails, you'll also need a drill (eggbeater style or a brace) and a hammer, as well as some screwdrivers. The basic tools for stock preparation, shaping and joinery can be broken into five groups: bench planes, detail and joinery tools, saws, tools for curved work and sharpening tools.

The jack, jointer and smoother planes – allows you to handle dimensioning and finishing of stock. The jack plane is between 14"-15" long, making it ideal for rough surfacing. As a medium-size tool, it is large enough to get things reasonably flat and short enough to get there quickly.

A roughing cut is the thickest, heaviest shaving, and is typically between .004"-.010" thick, depending on how cooperative the piece of wood is. (as reference, a piece of printer paper is typically about .004" thick.) To use this plane for heavy roughing, sharpen the blade with an 8"-10" radius; as this will make it perform more like a scrub plane.

A jointer plane has the large bearing surface (22"-24") required for flattening. It does not matter if the board you are working on is large or small; if you want it flat, grab your jointer plane.

A smoothing plane is 10" or less in length. It doesn't cut more smoothly than the other planes; it's simply a much shorter plane than a jack or jointer, so it allows you to take a thin finishing pass more quickly than the larger planes.

None of these numbers are set in stone, but just know that your roughing cut will be the thickest shaving, the flattening cut will be about half of that and the finishing cut will be about half that again.

When the late Georg Kuffel and I built the dining room table for our beach house, we used these planes for this project.

You should set your planes up for the cut before you go to work, so take test cuts on a small piece of scrap to get them set to what you want them to be. The type of cut you need to take will tell you which planes to use for which task.

The detail and joinery tools are tools for putting things together, trimming and fitting. A block plane, shoulder plane, rabbet plane, router plane, plow plane and some chisels make up this group. Though there is less choice in the more specialized joinery and detail tools, the same principles apply as to the bench planes: Let the work dictate the tool you reach for. (Again, if there are options, reach for the larger tool.)

The low-angle block plane, about 6" long (or shorter), allows you to trim and fit efficiently. It can even be used as a small smoothing plane as needed.

A large shoulder plane is about 10" long and has a blade that goes out to each edge of the plane's body to allow cuts into corners – a necessity when you are creating or cleaning up rabbets, or cutting tenon shoulders. The mass and size of a large plane, such as the No. 073, gives you more control than you get with its smaller cousins.

The rabbet plane's blade, like the shoulder plane, extends to the edges of the sole; it is an essential tool for casework because you'll often cut rabbets for joinery. Frequently, these run across the grain, so a skewed blade is preferable. The best vintage option for a skewed rabbet is the No. 289 – but because it's not easy to find, a skewed wooden rabbet plane or a No. 140 skewed block plane would be a good option.

A large router plane (such as the No. 71) can be fitted with a variety of sizes of blades to handle different tasks. It is ideal for creating an even depth for a dado, or trimming the cheek of a tenon.

The plow plane allows you to set a groove in the face or edge of a piece (for a drawer bottom or a panel, for example). You'll want several widths of blades for a variety of grooves. Tools such as the No. 45 and No. 55 combination planes can serve, but a dedicated plow plane is a better choice for this application.

While the section of bench planes explains which type of plane to use for each type of cut, it doesn't explain which plane is best in each category. This is where personal preference starts to come into play.

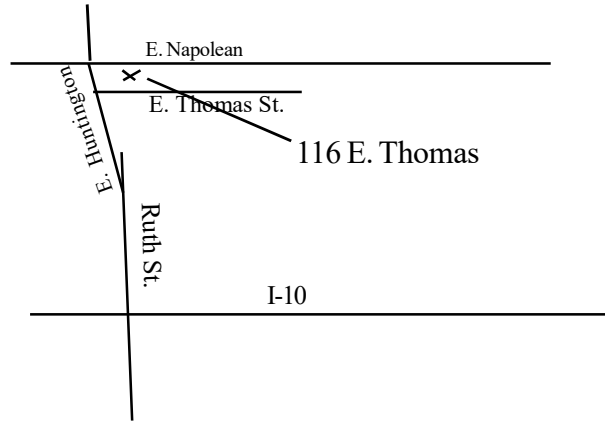
With high-angle frogs in traditional style (bevel-down) planes, you can get higher angles by changing the frog or adding a back bevel to the blade, which changes the blade's bedding angle. The higher angle of presentation means more resistance. Therefore, the more mass the tool has, the easier it is to use. This high-angle cuts are important, because you get much more control over tear-out in difficult-to-plane woods with a higher-angle cut.

As a general rule, it is far more important that you have a jack, jointer and smoother than to have be smooth but not perfectly flat. Enjoy your planes. Barry

March Meeting Location

We have the wonderful opportunity to meet at Patrick LaPoint's car port for the first time in a long time. Patrick's address is 116 East Thomas Street, Sulphur, LA 70663 and phone number is 337-563-8339 should you need further directions.

Go to Sulphur and go North on Ruth street (exit 23 off I-10). Continue onto Ruth to E. Huntington and then turn right onto to E. Thomas just before E. Napoleon. Patrick's home will be on your left at 116.



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