

Dick Trouth, President
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Barry Humphus, Editor, Bubba Cheramie
Gary Rock, Jeff Cormier, 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 have years of experience and knowledge.

September Meeting Highlights

Joe and Sandra Comeaux were the hosts this month at their fine shop. While the shop has about everything you need to do woodworking, like most of us, Joe wishes it were larger. We want to thank Joe and Sandra for hosting and especially Joe for taking great notes when we were out of town.

Lots of Show and Tell this month with Mr.Thibodeaux starting out showing a very nice tape dispenser he made from a plan in *Wood Magazine*. It is a laminated construction using sycamore for the sides, a purpleheart insert at the back, maple in front with a cedar wheel to hold the tape. He used a plastic cutter mounted in a dado.

Eltee's next item was a Custom Knife Box made of cedar and flocked inside. He said he used a spray adhesive on the interior and then a hand pump sprayer to blow in the flocking.

Pie Sonnier brought us a 1957 Chevrolet Corvette. Chevrolet pulled something amazing out of the hat for 1957: Fuel Injection. The 1957 version would set you back about \$3,400 (with the fuel injection option) - or about \$48,000 in todays money. Surprisingly, \$48K is about what a new 2011 Corvette Coup will run you today. Another \$183 bought you a 4-speed transmission and another \$780 got you the Sebring racing suspension (all in 1957 dollars).

The fuel injection system enabled Chevrolet to boast of 1 hp per cubic inch of displacement with the 283 cu. in., 283 hp engine. To keep this development in perspective, con-



sider this. Almost all of the high priced supposedly advanced competition -- including Jaguar, Porsche, Ferrari and Lamborghini -- did not go with fuel injection until the 1970s or later.

First run in 1956 at the Sebring race, the Rochester Ramjet injection was the answer to Mercedes-Benz which

featured fuel injection in their 1954 300SL and solved a fuel starvation proplem in high speed cornering. A restored version of this car today will cost you upwards of \$90,000.

Pie's does not have a fiberglass body, (or even fuel injection - unless you look very closely) instead he used black walnut, ash, purpleheart and cherry, finished with three coats of polyurethane and built it for a client in California. Let's see, at about 1/8th scale, Pie's 1957 'Vet should bring about \$11,000 -- but only if it were in like new, running condition!

By the way, I once took one of those 283 Corvette engines and 4-speed transmissions and dropped them into a 1957 Studebaker Hawk during my racing/hotrodding days. The main problem with the combination was the inadequacy of the brakes. It eventaully got very very compressed and likely got turned into refrigerators.

J.W. Anderson brought photos of a table for his outdoor kitchen. As it is always better to reuse than recycle, J.W. did both. He bought a drop leaf table at a garage sale, reusing the frame and legs. After cleaning and painting the frame and legs, he built a new top from spalted sycamore and used a water-based polyurethan for the finish.

Dr. Bill Fey brought some toys he created for some of his nephews. These included an old fashion spinning top with a throw string, made of beech and finished with an oil rub, two pull-string tops of pine with no finish as well as two spinning tops of pine without finish. Nice work. Bill also showed a turned bowl made of native cherry. The wood was given to him by a DeQuincy resident and finished with a combination of Danish oil and wipe-on polyurethane.

One more item from Bill was that he brought a guest, Bill Levy who joined the LCWW. Attached to our email-out of the newsletter is an updated membership list that Joe kindly put together. The snail-mail version will also have the updated list.

As our meeting date was on the 9th anniversary of the 2001 9/11 tragedy, Dick Trouth asked us to remember the victims of that awful day when terrorist changed the way we think about the world forever.

Coming Up . . . Saturday, October 9, 9:00 A.M. on the patio of Barry Humphus. Sorry guys, the shop is just too small in which to have a meeting.

Clean Cutting With A Miter Saw

Power miter saws rank second only to table saws in woodshop popularity, and behind only circular saws at construction sites. So if you're among the many who regularly use a miter saw, you'll find these tips will make your sawing safer and easier.

Hurried house framers are particularly guilty of chopping and not cutting: physically pushing the blade down into the wood as fast as they can. Of course, a good miter saw with a sharp blade will cut faster than you can push it down anyway, but don't do this. All you end up doing is making a lousy cut. And how can you be sure your other hand will always be out of harm's way? Just take your time and let the miter saw do the work.

Starting your cut when the work isn't flush against the fence and solidly on the table is the surest way I know of to destroy a good piece of wood—and a miter saw. It can result in broken fences, broken blades, broken or cut upper and lower guards, and if you're lucky, only a general bad attitude for the rest of the day. Before you make a cut on your miter saw, always make sure you have the board completely on the table and flush against the fence.

Cutting accurate miter angles on crown moldings with a standard (not compound) miter saw can be one of the hardest trim jobs imaginable. That's because you mount most crown molding at an angle of 38° to the wall. Therefore, you need to hold the molding at this angle when you make the cut—not easy to do. And because there's not solid contact with both the fence and the table, a slip could put you in danger as well as damage the workpiece.

Here's a good way to make those cuts. Simply make a filler block by ripping a 2x4 to a 38° bevel on your table saw. Then, attach the filler block to your miter saw fence with the 38° angle up. When you place the crown molding upside down against the filler block, the cut will come out perfectly. For even more control, clamp a scrap-wood stop at the base of the molding to prevent any tipping during the cut.

Unfortunately, I've not seen a universal fixture for cutting irregularly shaped wood, such as a dowel. But I do know that the trick to doing it safely is to clamp the work firmly against the fence and on the table. A handscrew will work very well, even for dowels. *Barry Humphus* edited from *Wood Magazine*.

Basswood - The Carver's Choice

There is more to basswood than chips as LCWW member John Marcon can attest. Native Americans stripped the inner bark of basswood in early spring for use as cords, rope, and thread.

Although you'll find five native species of basswood trees in North America, the most widespread is the American basswood (*Tilia Americana*). It grows from New Brunswick to North Dakota and south to Missouri and West Virginia. But basswood grows in Europe as well and is called lemonwood there.

Today, basswood stock has become the carver's wood of choice. That's because the featureless, fine-grained, whitish wood won't split or chip ahead of the blade. This also makes it very good for thin sided boxes and even secondary wood for drawers to use instead of poplar.

Even among some Native Americans of centuries ago it had its place as a carving wood. The Iroquois Indians of New York's Adirondack Mountains, for instance, carved masks from basswood, although with a quite-different approach. They shaped them in the sapwood of standing trees, then split them off the trunk to complete the hollowing.

In those long-ago days, Indians of many tribes also made good use of the basswood's inner bark. This material ranks among the toughest of nature's fibers. Stripped from trees in early spring, the bark was soaked in water for weeks to let the softest tissue rot (decay). The remaining strands then were twisted into cord and rope. Thinner bark fibers became sewing thread.

While technology has replaced these fibers with nylon and other materials, basswood stock still retains a place in commerce. It becomes boxes, crates, toys, substrate for veneers, and hidden furniture parts. And if you happen to have a yardstick given away long ago by a local hardware store or lumberyard, you can bet it's made of basswood because the wood takes ink so well. By the way, the next time you leave a restaurant and pick up a toothpick, you are sometimes getting basswood. *Barry Humphus*.

Aspen -- Abundant, blond, and splinter-free

Aspen, due to sheer quantity alone, supports much of the logging industry across the Great Lakes states and Canada. Abundant because it propagates and grows rapidly in areas cleared by fire or harvest, aspen has many commercial uses. You'll find it in furniture, matchsticks, boxes and crates, paneling, and chipboard. And, this plentiful tree has been a popular source for paper pulp since the late 1940s. After the 'Great Rape' of the 1920's to the 1970's of our National forests by loggers, aspen was often the species that naturally replaced the great swaths of clear-cut.

Beavers love aspen bark and consider it a staple food. These busy creatures, forever dam-building, also favor the wood for construction. They'll often gnaw down trees a half-mile or more from their damsite, and then drag or float

Aspen - Continued

them home. Grouse, too, cherish aspen, but for its succulent seeds—so small that it takes more than two million to make a pound.

Quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), so-called because its leaves flutter in the slightest breeze, has an unbelievably wide growing range. It grows in a mostly northern belt stretching from Labrador and Newfoundland to Alaska's Yukon River. But, you can even find it in Mexico and Tennessee. Bigtooth (or large-tooth) aspen (*Populus grandidentata*), which also quakes, prefers the Great Lakes states and New England.

Kin to willow and cottonwood, aspen rarely exceeds 60' heights and diameters of 20". In their first 20 to 30 years it grows rapidly, and quickly renews a forest.

Bark on young trees may be white or greenish white, with dark gray or black welts and ridges. On older trees the bark can be 2" thick, black near the base, and deeply fissured.

If you confuse aspen's bark with that of white birch, the leaves provide identification. Both aspen have oval-shaped leaves with toothed edges and stems flattened on the sides. Sapwood comprises the majority of wood in aspen. It has the whiteness of holly or poplar. The small heartwood core produces light brown wood, often streaked and discolored. It weighs 25 pounds per cubic foot.

Fine-grained, straight, and uniform in texture, aspen generally lacks distinct pattern. Occasional mottle- and stripe-figured logs become veneers.

Aspen contains very low resin, and has toughness as well as exceptional stiffness. The wood resists splitting when nailing or screwing, yet you can work it easily with hand tools because of its softness. It also glues well.

Due to the tendency for aspen's wood fibers to fuzz when worked, you need to use tools with sharp blades and cutters. While this wood takes paint readily, it blotches when stained unless you first apply a sealer.

You'll find aspen a stable wood that wears without splintering. However, in conditions favoring decay, it deteriorates.

For carving, aspen makes a first-rate substitute for basswood. You also can fashion it into light-duty furniture, solid paneling, and millwork.

Aspen has no odor and imparts no taste to food-stuffs, so it's ideal for baskets, bowls, and containers. Children's toys made from aspen remain splinter-free.

Across the southern reaches of the nation, aspen lumber may be hard to find. Where sold, however, the boards will be high quality, but generally neither unusually wide nor thicker than 1". Expect to pay about \$1.15 per

board foot for lumber and around 50 cents per square foot for mottle- and stripe-figured veneer. *Barry Humphus*, edited from *The Nature of Wood*.

Bubinga

The African heavyweight with remarkable figure, Bubinga, was once thought to be a variety of rosewood. It yields huge, heavy logs much sought after for veneer and turning.

In the swamps and along the jungle waterways of Gabon in Equatorial Africa, there grows a giant of a tree. Towering at 130' or more, it yields mostly defect-free logs 6' in diameter and up to 70' long. Such a log can weigh as much as 10 tons, so loggers must await the seasonal rains to float the wood to port.

European woodworkers probably know little of the rugged origins of one of their favorite veneers. What they do know, though, is that the rotary-cut veneer that they call kevazingo has a wonderful swirling figure that's equally eye-catching as paneling or cabinetry. Even their predecessors recognized the classy qualities of this wood.

In 1974, my wife and I were privileged to see one of these massive logs cut into veneer at All-Woods Schoder in Houston on an enormous rotary cutter. A huge crane was used to lift the 10-ton log onto an enormous rotary cutter in their facility on Telephone Road. The raw wood had a rather sweet smell as it was slowly turned into a twelve foot long blade. Workman gently lifted off the thin veneer as it came off the cutter and took these to dry. Sadley, All-Woods eventually closed down and was sold many years ago.

It regularly appeared in French Renaissance furniture of the 1700s, when this rich reddish wood was named bois de roe d' Afrique (African rosewood) because it was thought to be a type of rosewood.

Across the Atlantic, American woodworkers scratch their heads at the word kevazingo. They recognize the strikingly colored wood from Africa's steamy jungles as bubinga (*Guibourtia demeusei*). Woodturners especially like its even texture and delicate veins of dark red and often purple. And luthiers, always seeking new stock, have fashioned bubinga into guitar sides and backs as a substitute for their favored rosewood.

But they'll never see much bubinga in board form at any one time. That's because it weighs nearly 60 pounds per cubic foot, making shipping expensive. Turned into rotary-cut veneer at African and U.S. mills, though, massive bubinga logs become kevazingo and reach more markets at far lesser cost. *Barry Humphus* from *The Nature of Wood*.