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JANUARY MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Gary Rock was our host this month while Dick Trough and Gary were our presenters. What we learned from their presentation applies to almost every wood working project we do. At least half the job of completing a project is the finishing. Both Dick and Gary care a lot about the “other” half as this shows from the care and patience they use in finishing the bowls they turn.

The pleasure of doing the turning usually does not mean you are finished. My problem in finishing bowls has always been the end grain. Both Gary and Dick use progressively finer sanding, starting at about 100 grit and going to as fine as 2000 wet/dry sand paper. Also remember that the better and sharper your gouges and skews, the less you have to work getting the finish just right, the finer the starting sandpaper and the less work you will do to complete a bowl or spindle.

Gary uses a lot of Danish finishing oil (Watco) and other Danish finish oils work well. He starts the finish process using a progressively finer sandpaper and when satisfied, coats the entire bowl with Danish oil. In fact he drowns it. The idea is to soak in as much Danish oil as possible, wiping off the excess after 30 minutes to an hour, then re-coat until the work piece cannot take it anymore. For a higher polished look, he uses a 50% reduced (with mineral spirits—paint thinner) polyurethane, wet sanded with up

to 2000 grit wet/dry paper. The poly works very well with the Danish oil (as poly contains tung oil like the Watco). For soft finishes, he uses the Danish oil only, burnishing with a piece of cardboard (craft paper will also work well, i.e., paper grocery bags) as a final step in most cases.

If the wood is porous (oak, mahogany, ash,

teak, etc.), or on end-grain, Gary and Dick use a wood grain filler (available at most home and hardware suppliers such as South City Paint). The key to using any of these is to carefully follow the directions printed on the can (and be sure to wait 24 hours before proceeding). Wood grain filler comes in several colors but you can match the color needed using Minwax oil stains as they are compatible with wood grain fillers. And for extremely polished finish, use “rotten” stone (finely ground pumic). By the way, there are several products on the market that offer rotten stone in a solution along with other polishing materials. The one I’ve used is from Mohawk (www.mohawk-finishing.com), called Poly Buf. It comes in medium to extra-fine and is specifically designed for wood. Mohawk also makes an extensive line of stains, wood fillers, coatings and even leather finishing products.

Gary and Dick sometimes use epoxy to fill in larger cracks and holes. While it cures clear (even the “five minute” version should be left over night to really harden), you can add color to it using artists



acrylic paints (T-Miller, Hobby Lobby, etc.) as these are compatible with epoxy. These paints are very concentrated and generally come in a tube.

While Gary uses lots of traditional wood finishes on bowls, Dick Trough also uses some of the so-called “high build friction finishes.” Basically, these are shallac with additives. The idea is to dabble

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Coming Up . . .

Saturday, February 14, 9:00 a.m. Let’s scroll. Eltee

Thibodeaux and Chuck Middleton will show us some of their secrets at Middleton’s shop.



on a small amount of the product and use the friction from the spinning object with a cotten "mouse" to coat and polish the item (old, clean piece of T-shirt works very well). These leave a very high gloss finish that can be softened by burnishing with craft paper, cardboard or 0000 steel wool. A better choice is to use a non-ferrous metal wool such as brass wool because the brass will not react with woods containing tannic acid (many woods do, especially oak). Having used this sort of product on both turned pens and bowls, I can testify that it is easy to use, dries almost instantly and leaves a great finish (presuming that the underlying fine sanding was a good job).

Of all the finishes that can be used on bowls, probably the safest for coming in contact with food is shellac. Shellac finishes have been around for hundreds of years and is virtually inert as an allergen. In fact, many medical pills are coated with shellac. But like many finishes, it oxidizes and turns to a mushy mix in the bottom of the jar



after a few months (see www.shellac.net for flake shellac products). In other words, shellac has a fairly short shelf life. To solve this problem, they recommend Bloxygen. Bloxygen is a combination of nitrogen, argon and a little carbon-dioxide (as a propellant) that is sprayed into a jar of finish. This blocks the oxygen in the air from reacting with the finish and preserves the finishing product. Bloxygen also works with other finishes including paint. Gary showed a jar of shellac that had been treated with Bloxygen that was over six months old and still ready to use (see www.bloxygen.com for sources of supply).

Rick Haught asked about using wood bleaches (Rick always asks the hard questions!). Jeff Cormier (our chemist and a premier cabinet maker) recommended that you use caution when using these products. Most of them are a solution of oxalic acid and are very toxic. Make sure you follow the directions with the product and keep it away from children.

Gary reminded the group that if anyone wants to come by and turn something on his lathe, discuss more about finishing a turning or help with a turning, just give him a call to be sure he's there.

Show and Tell had some interesting items. Besides Gary Rock's sample bowls, Lee Frazier brought a recent scrollwork item—a wood cross. Barry Humphus showed one of the bowl sanding products he uses—a combination of sand paper and 3M pad made to chuck in a drill and available in several grits at Stine's Lumber. Eltee Thibodeaux built a neat jig for precise routing and Dick Troth showed off a recent large cutting board as well as handed out a great document on bowl finishing. See the article in the Projects section of the LCWW web site at <http://woodworkers.lightwire.net>.

LIGHTENING WOOD WITH BLEACH

Removing the natural color of wood is best done with the two-part peroxide bleaches. These are available as "A/B" bleaches sold in most paint and hardware stores. The most common way to apply this product is to wet the wood thoroughly with part A (sodium hydroxide) then immediately apply part B (hydrogen peroxide).

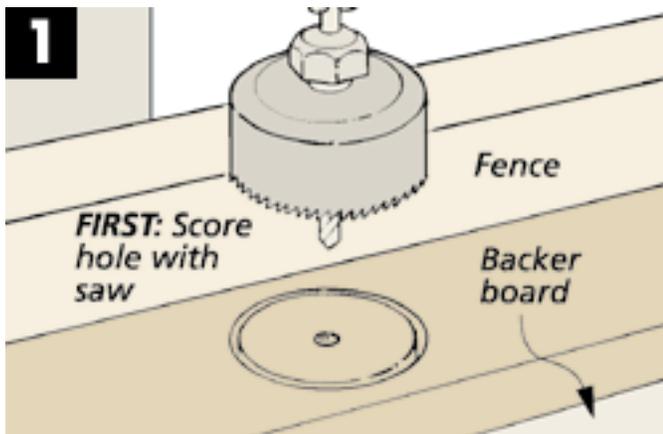
It's important that part A not sit too long before applying part B because sodium hydroxide will darken some tannin-rich woods like cherry and oak. You can also mix the two parts together and apply them at the same time, as long as you do it as quickly as possible after the two parts are mixed. Sometimes you need more than one application to even out the bleaching effect. Some dark woods, like ebony, are not affected by this bleach which is an advantage if you want to bleach a wood that has ebony stringing. On some woods, particularly walnut, a greenish tinge may appear in some areas if the bleach is not applied evenly. To alleviate this problem, try to apply the bleach evenly and sparingly, just enough to make the wood wet. Do not flood the wood. Neutralize the alkaline effect of this bleach after the wood is dry by applying a weak acid like vinegar. Use white vinegar mixed one part vinegar to two parts water.

A/B bleach will remove all the natural color variations present in wood, so use them judiciously. Over-bleached woods will lack tonal variations and depth even if stained afterward. Use them only when matching sun-faded wood, or to provide a neutral base upon which you can create a decorative finish like pickled oak or blond mahogany. A/B bleaches can be used to compensate for heartwood/sapwood variations, but you should bring the sapwood in line with the heartwood by hand coloring or spraying the sapwood with a dye stain. *Barry Humphus.*

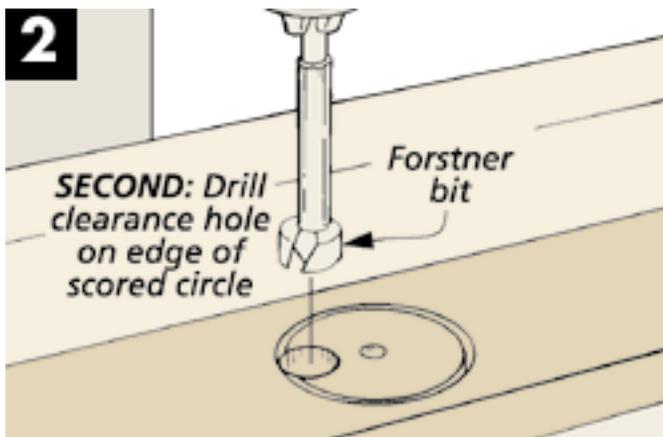
HOLE SAW RELIEF

Whenever you use a hole saw, you sometimes encounter a problem. Right off the bat, the teeth will clog with sawdust and the saw will heat up and start to burn the wood. After the smoke clears, you'll find the hole is a mess. But there is a "secret" technique for using a hole saw.

The idea is pretty simple. First, use the hole



saw to lightly score the surface of the wood and outline the hole. Next drill a 3/4" clearance hole all the way through the workpiece along the inside edge of the scored "circle." When you resume cutting with



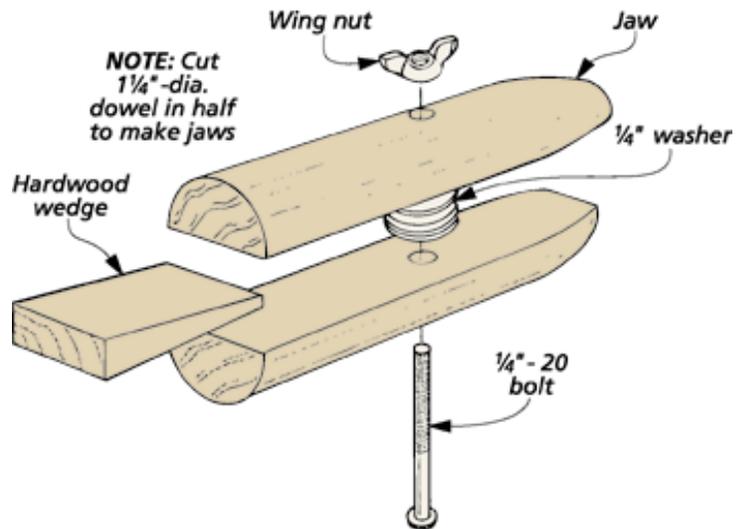
the hole saw, the clearance hole will allow the sawdust to escape the teeth.

If the saw doesn't clog, it won't heat up and burn the wood. When you resume cutting with the hole saw, the clearance hole will allow the sawdust to escape the saw teeth. Edited from *Woodworkingtips.com* (Ted Raife, Woodsmith)

SMALL PARTS CLAMP

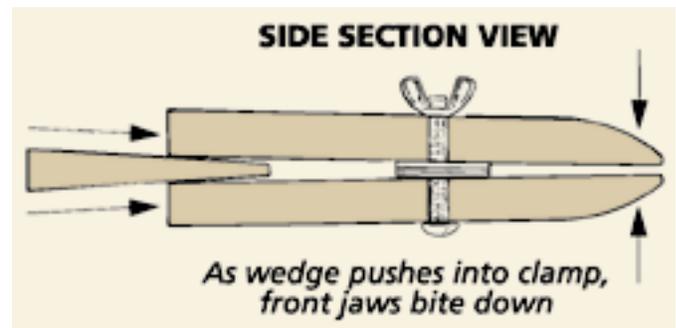
Occasionally, you need to sand a small wooden part on a drum or disk sander. But holding onto small parts can be a challenge. A pair of pliers could do the job, but you want something with a softer grip. So here's a small parts clamp shown below.

The jaws of the clamp are made from a short



section of 1 -1/4" dowel. The dowel is split down the center and then the two halves are reassembled with a bolt, a wing nut and a few washers that space the "jaws" apart. A wedge inserted at the back of the clamp forces the jaws together.

Start by drilling the bolt hole through the



dowel section and then tapering the jaw end with a sander. After cutting the dowel lengthwise on the bandsaw, you can assemble the clamp as shown in the drawing.

The final part is the small, hardwood wedge used to close the jaws. When you force the wedge in from the back of the clamp, the jaws will bite down firmly on whatever is between them. Edited from *Woodworkingtips.com* (Ted Raife, Woodsmith)