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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 Trough: 583-2683. Each have years of experience and knowledge.

February Meeting Highlights

J.W. and Velma Anderson’s wonderful outdoor/indoor kitchen was our meeting place this month. The place is great with lots of space, a full kitchen, restroom and of course Velma’s tasty treats. Thank to you both.

Jeff Cormier started us off by discussing and demonstrating various types of featherboards and their safety features. These come in handy for what Jeff mostly does and that is cabinet and case work. Jeff discussed several types and thanks to his notes, we’ve included the details later in the Newsletter.

Starting off Show and Tell, Joe Comeaux showed



us a nice clock of mesquite, a couple of turned pens (snake wood and circuit board) and a kalidescope of unknown wood. Mr. Thibodeaux did a self-portrait in miniature of him at his scroll saw plus a puzzle of a family photo.

Ray Kebodeauz had a very good turned box of magnolia plus a letter opener turned out of juniper and osage

orange. Sandy Kramer presented a scroll saw key holder while Dr. Don Elfert showed off a neat chess board and described how to cut the squares so they fit the frame.

J.W. Anderson had an antique box scraper (Stanley #70). Interestingly, these were designed, not for woodworkers, but for people who wanted to reuse wooden shipping crates. They could quickly scrape off the lettering on the side and repaint their own logo. They were made from 1877 to 1958 and if you want one, they can be had on eBay for



about \$10 to \$35.

J.W. also produced one of his great trivets for us. Another item was a unique coffee table of cypress. This was in a “Z” patterned table and much admired out of cypress with a distinctive red stripe in the wood. Steve McCorquodale was asked about what causes this and he deferred to further research but suggested the cause is typically a fungus that can cause blue, green, black, red or orange colors within wood. J.W. discussed the difficulty in selecting the correct angles for his cuts. What a wonderful design.

Steve McCorquodale does wonderful furniture from the great collection of wood that he mills. This time he brought an outstanding pink cypress bench that we admired. If you get a chance, visit Steve (and buy some of his great wood) and ask to visit his home. There you will find some of the many wonderful items he has constructed over many years.

The Time has Come

If you have not paid your 2012 Dues for the Lake Charles Woodworkers Club, your membership is over. In order to support what we do, we must have your support in a small way and that is \$20 for a family membership per year. If you are still interested, then send \$20 to Sandy Kramer, 6821 Bumbury Rd., Lake Charles, LA 70605

Coming Up . . . Saturday, March 10 at 09:00 A.M at the shop of Pie Sonnier in Sulphur. Be there.

Featherboards and Their Uses By Jeff Cormier

Featherboards can improve your work and shop safety in several ways. The most important quality is that they bring to your shop is SAFETY. In the February meeting, I have combined a jig presentation with safety.

Featherboards can be an extra set of hands to guide your work while the work is close to blades or cutters, exactly where your hands should not go. They can give consistent pressure on your stock exactly where it is needed most – close to the cut.

They can be set up to provide either sideward or downward pressure, or both. They can prevent bumps in moldings from uneven pressure or side or upward movement while the stock is feed to the cutter at a router table. They can also allow you to focus on a consistent feed rate to reduce burning on woods like maple or cherry rather than focusing on the alignment.

There are other types of featherboards besides standard fingerboards. Some rely on spring rollers to keep consistent pressure. Others rely on a thin bowed strip to provide the pressure. In my opinion, those types would be okay to use on a bandsaw, but not a tablesaw or router table. A properly set up fingerboard provides substantial kickback reduction, which increases safety. A roller or bow would not.

Featherboards can be used on jointers to keep the stock against the fence while edge jointing. I noticed that Bubba Chermie had bored and tapped out holes on his jointer top to mount a featherboard. This is a great idea, but will void the warranty on your jointer. Another solution is the *Magswitch* (about \$45 in various models) or *Grip Tite* (about \$40) type of commercial featherboards.

Some of these are a plastic fingerboard with rare earth magnets to provide a strong pull down against a cast iron table. They use a threaded knobs to break the contact so the *Magswitch* is an example and can be removed or realigned. These are excellent products, but pricey at between \$45 and \$60. They can also only be used on ferrous metal of a table saw and will not work with aluminum fences or plywood router tables. For example, these will not work with synthetic table saw tops from Bosch, Ryobi, Makita and even Sears.

Another commercial type is the *Board Buddy* (about \$70 from Rockler). This is a springed roller that mounts to a table saw fence and pushes the board down and to the right against the fence. There are competing similar models, most only roll in one direction and this may be a concern.

I prefer shop made featherboards. They can be custom made for the tool, and are often made from scraps. I

prefer a straight grained wood, and find that pine or poplar work better for me than hardwoods like oak or maple. You can make featherboards that you cannot buy, such as long-reach or thicker types. I usually clamp them down with bar clamps, but they can also be held down with t-bolts that fit into t-slots on your router table or table saw fence, or the miter gauge slot. They can also be held down using friction.

If you use bar clamps, it will take at least two. A featherboard can be held in place with one clamp on the featherboard itself, and another on a backing board to keep the featherboard from swiveling

I don't care for plywood as a stock for featherboards, but some people use it. There is a particular type of featherboard that is made of plywood for mounting



as a hold-down on a tablesaw fence. Since the wood is cut cross-grain, plywood is the best answer.

Setting the featherboard can be tricky, but is quickly learned. It needs to be set so it applies pressure, but not so much that it is difficult to push the stock through. Push sticks are still necessary. A large or poorly set featherboard could get in the way.

On the router table, featherboards can be set up in front of the cut as well behind the cut, or even directly at the cut.

Never set a featherboard after the cut on a table saw, of course. You do not want to bind the stock against the blade. If you have a riving knife on your table saw, it will keep the stock against the fence if it is set properly. I read of one suggestion that 1/8 inch be trimmed off the first finger and the featherboard be aligned on that finger and clamped. That is likely the way to do this.

Note that Jeff Cormier is a chemist, a teacher and with long experience in the industrial community, safety, woodworking and of course in so many other things. *Jeff Cormier from his wonderful advise and great experience. Thanks Jeff.*

Block Plane Basics

More and more woodworkers are bringing power jointers and planers into their shops, often pushing hand planes into dusty corners. But a plain old plane still comes in handy, even in the most up-to-the-minute shop. Here's one of the handiest: the block plane. First of all, I like hand planes and here is why -- they do a good -- no -- great job at giving you a flat surface and I have certainly used them to make a dining table flat, smooth and beautiful with that look that is just fabulous.

A sharp, properly adjusted hand plane allows a woodworker to peel a whisper-thin shaving from wood while leaving a surface of unsurpassed quality. That's why these venerable tools -- planes go back to Roman times -- still fit into today's shop. And, among hand planes, the block plane ranks near the top for versatility and convenience.

Using a block plane feels almost natural -- and very craftsmanlike. You hold it in one hand, with the rounded top of the iron cap (see the Plane Parts illustration, bottom right of the article) in your palm. When you push the plane forward, you also press the sole down against the wood.

A block plane handles many tasks, including some that would be difficult or unsafe to perform with power tools. Rely on the block plane to wipe out the wavy machine-milling marks on lumberyard stock, leaving it satin-smooth. After sawing out your parts, eliminate saw marks with a few passes of the block plane.

Grab the block plane to true a piece too small to run safely over your jointer. Clamp the plane upside down in your vise, and you can plane parts barely large enough to grasp.

Turn to the block plane to bevel or chamfer edges, especially on short or narrow pieces. Just draw guidelines, and plane to them. For best results, make several passes, angling the plane across the edge. Planing bevels or chamfers by hand is faster than machining them, considering setup time. And it's always quieter than routing them.

When sawing a tapered part, many woodworkers like to cut slightly outside the layout line, then sand down to it. But, shaving down to the line with a block plane results in a nicer surface and a truer edge.

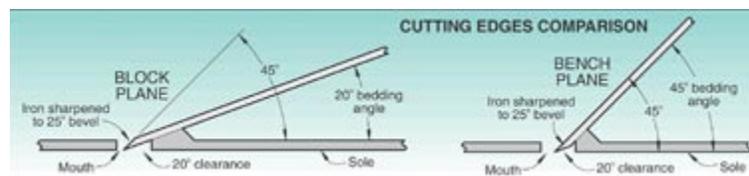
You've built a small cabinet and hung the door. But it binds a bit. Instead of taking the door off to rework it, just mark the high spot and shave it off with your block plane.

When any project part would fit better if it was just a smidgen narrower or shorter, the block plane can save the day. The block plane owes its handy size in part to the shallow angle between the blade--or iron--and the sole. This

bedding angle is usually in the neighborhood of 20° for block planes. In a bench plane, it's normally about 45°.

Even so, a block plane's cutting edge meets the wood at about the same angle as a bench plane's. That's because the bevel on the block plane's iron faces up. (For a block plane, the angle of the cutting edge to the work equals the bedding angle plus the iron's bevel angle.)

You'll also find block planes with a bedding angle of about 12°. These low-angle planes slice through wood more easily, but may cause tear-out along the grain. Some wood-



workers prefer low-angle block planes for end-grain work. Tuning benefits any plane, old or new. On a block plane, you should check two main points--sole flatness and iron bedding.

Check the sole with a sheet of 180-grit wet-or-dry sandpaper laid abrasive side up on a flat surface. (A cast-iron saw table or piece of glass would do.) Retract the iron, and rub the plane sole over the abrasive. Scuff marks indicate high spots on the sole.

To flatten the sole, wet the sandpaper, then continue rubbing the plane sole over it. When the sole shows a uniform scuff pattern, it's flat. Polish it, following the same procedure with progressively finer sandpaper grits.

To check the bedding, extend the iron. Then, inspect the back of the mouth to determine how solidly it supports the iron. If gaps appear between the back of the iron and the back of the mouth, or if the iron rocks in the throat, remove the iron and carefully file down the high spots in the plane. Check the cap for full contact, too. Solid bedding helps prevent chatter.

Sharpen the iron to a 25-30° bevel. Position it in the plane's body, bevel up, engaging the appropriate notch over the tang on the adjuster, when applicable. Center the iron in the throat, and install the iron cap.

Extend the cutting edge slightly past the sole. (Determining the proper amount of protrusion takes some trial and error; the thickness of a business card is a good starting point.) Square the end with the mouth, and then tighten the iron cap.

Some block planes feature an adjustable mouth. To regulate the length of the mouth opening, turn the front knob to loosen the sliding part, and move the eccentric lever. Generally, a smaller opening suits finer work. *Barry Humphuis*