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### NOVEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

Dick Truth hosted the November meeting at his shop. We had a round-table discussion on several subjects.

We also welcomed new members J.W. Anderson, Mickey McMillen (both from DeRidder) and Steve McCorquodale from Longville.

Steve owns the McCorquodale Mill in Longville. If you need some fine hardwood (cherry, pecan, cypress, cedar and more), see him at the mill: 449 McCorquodale Road, Longville, LA 70652. Give Steve a call if you need directions at 337-725-6874. To get there, take Hwy 171 north to Longville and turn left (West) onto Hwy 110. About a mile turn left (South) onto Adcock Rd. McCorquodale Rd. will be on your right just more than a mile from the turn off from Hwy 110. The Mill (and Steve's home) is just before the 'Y' on McCorquodale Rd. Steve uses a large bandsaw system to slab the carefully selected logs. He also has a large planer for surfacing and a kiln. However, most lumber is sold wet.

Dick Truth discussed some of the differences in various types of turning gouges. The profile for most bowl gouges is a fingernail shape for smaller ones and almost a 'U' shape for the larger roughing types. Spindle gouges have a flatter shape. While you can use a spindle gouge for bowl turning, you have to be careful that the points do not catch. In fact, it would be best if they were ground off. The key to using either is an even and smooth ground bevel. An uneven bevel with more than one facet will produce a rough cut.

A member asked about a source for Sandalwood. This wood is mostly found in India where it's harvested for the leaves, berries and small branches are used for oil and as an additive for perfumes. The stripped trees are felled and left for white ants to remove the sap wood and the heart is then harvested for milling. It is heavy, hard, but splits easily; color is light yellow with transverse sections yellow to light reddish brown, and alternating light and dark concentric zones nearly equal in diameter, numerous pores, and traversed by many very narrow medul-

lary rays. Sandalwood is not typically available in the US lumber markets as the harvesting is an Indian government monopoly and closely controlled. However, an African variety, called Tambootie, is available in small sizes (generally 3 x 3 x 12 inches) for turners. Unfortunately, at \$18-20 per BF, it is expensive. Righteous Hardwoods of Boston, MA (Ordering 877 - 843 - 9265). They carry a large variety of common and exotic hardwoods and their selections can be seen at [www.righteouswoods.net](http://www.righteouswoods.net).

Kingwood was mentioned as well. It is also called Violetwood or Violete. It has a bright luster, fine texture and is very stable in service. It is very hard, heavy and takes a high natural polish and develops patina as it ages. The wood is from Brazil and rare, with prices of \$25 for a 2 x 2 x 12 inch turning square. There are several sources on the Internet including [www.woodworkerssource.net](http://www.woodworkerssource.net). They can be contacted at 800-423-2450, and have many exotics and common hardwoods in varying sizes.

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### 2005 DUES DUE

Beginning in December, we start collecting the 2005 annual Lake Charles Woodworkers Club dues. The \$20 we collect from each member pays for lots of things including this Newsletter (printing and postage), LCWW web site hosting services (design and update services are donated), meeting supplies (coffee, donuts and incidentals), offsets part of the expense of our BBQ as well as provides donations to local charities. Your membership is for you and your immediate family.

Mail your \$20 check, payable to LCWW to Dick Hopes, 1139 Green Road, Lake Charles, LA 70611. You can also give your check or cash to Dick at one of our meetings.

**Coming Up . . .** The annual Christmas meeting will once again be at the incredible shop of Gail and Mickey Hart. If it is a woodworking power tool, the Harts have it. Saturday, December 11 at 9:00 a.m.

## TOXICITY OF WOOD

For centuries, it's been fairly common knowledge that some woods could hinder your health. As far back as 60 A.D., the Roman historian and naturalist Pliny the Elder described a case where soldiers died after drinking wine from hip flasks made of yew. German sawyers in the early 1700s developed chronic irritation of the nose and eyes, as well as headaches from sawing bald cypress.

What are your chances of a reaction to wood? Statistics say that only 2 to 5% of all people develop an allergic sensitivity to one or more compounds found in wood. But, if you handle a lot of potentially toxic species, and work with them long enough, you increase your chances of an allergic reaction. With sufficient exposure, some woods bother almost everyone.

Any dust, including wood dust, mildly irritates the sensitive mucous membranes of your nose and eyes, making you sneeze and tear. The dust of some woods such as western red cedar and rosewood can be especially bothersome. However, other woods, called irritants, can make you even more uncomfortable, with a rash that classifies as either irritant dermatitis or allergic dermatitis. The rash usually has a uniformly red, swollen area that may erupt in blisters, and typically first shows up on the webs of skin between your fingers. Irritant woods include black locust, cocobolo, ebony, oleander, satinwood, sequoia, and yew.

For you to get an allergic-type rash, you first must be allergy-prone to one of more of the chemicals found in certain woods called sensitizers. It may take repeated contact for your body to develop a great enough allergy for it to react (the so-called latency period of as little as five days and up to 6-8 months). If you do eventually get a reaction, the rash will look like poison ivy—red with small, individual, itchy bumps. Sensitizer woods include cypress, balsam fir, beech, birch, elm, greenheart, mahogany, maple, myrtle, redwood, sassafras, spruce, walnut, willow, western red cedar, and teak.

In addition to the actual wood dust, molds frequently trigger reactions, too. One that actually grows in wood happens to be extremely potent: *Cryptostroma corticale*. This mold lives happily between the bark and sapwood of many hardwood trees, especially favoring maple and birch. It's responsible for the marbled spalling that woodturners prize, and for "maple bark stripper's disease," a condition with all the symptoms of a severe respiratory allergy.

If you have an aspirin allergy, be wary of willow and birch. Both of these species possess significant concentrations of salicylic acid (the predecessor of aspirin) and very sensitive individuals might only need casual exposure, such as a whiff of sawdust, to react.

Never say "no" to a dust mask. Among woodworkers, the chances of developing nasal and sinus cancer run about 5-40 times greater than non-woodworkers. Although researchers haven't identified the exact cancer-causing compound (primarily because the disease has a latency period from 30 to 50 years), some evidence points to dust from wood with high tannin content, such as chestnut, oak, redwood, western red cedar, and hemlock.

If you are sensitive to wood dust, work in a well ventilated area (this also reduces the risk to mold), avoid unseasoned wood as much as possible, and wash or shower frequently. If you develop persistent rashes or respiratory problems, contact your physician or dermatologist.

One last caution: pressure-treated wood. Those 4x4 posts, faded green and with the little tick marks all up and down them, are great for sinking in the ground to anchor your deck. But they are impervious to rot because they are typically treated with Chromated Copper Arsenate (thought this is becoming less common due to revised EPA regulations).

You don't want to cut, sand or work this wood in a closed shop, and NEVER burn the cut-offs. It should always be worked outdoors, and any leftovers should go out with standard trash collection. Wear long sleeves and a good dust mask when working it, then launder all clothing afterward separately. The preservative chemicals have been proven to be safely bound in the wood fibers, but the dust from working pressure-treated wood is truly nasty stuff.

Woodworking, like many activities, is inherently dangerous, and knowing about the dangers is the first step in preventing them. Some of the most beautiful woods may be the ones that require the greatest care in handling them, so be informed and work safely. From *Barry Humphus and Albert Forest Products, Inc.*

## WEBSITE UPDATE

At the suggestion of some members at the November meeting, we will start a Shop and Swap area on the LCWW website in the near future. The idea is that you can contact Barry Humphus and give him any information about woodworking items, woodworking tools or woodworking services that you would like to sell or trade. For example, if you have a woodworking or other tool you would like to sell, contact Barry, give a description, firm price and how to contact you and he'll post it on the LCWW web site. The deals made through this page are strictly between our members or others. The LCWW will take no responsibility about the quality, availability or veracity of any item listed. You can contact Barry at 477-8474 or email him at [bhumphus@goexpress.net](mailto:bhumphus@goexpress.net).

## MORE NOVEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

Other (closer) sources of hardwood include Houston Hardwoods, 4910 W. 34th St, Houston, Tx, 77092. Call them at 713-686-6176. They are located off US 290 (N.W. of the 610 Loop) in Houston. They have a web site at [www.houstonhardwoods.com](http://www.houstonhardwoods.com) and carry common hardwoods, hardwood plywood, hardwood moldings and do custom moldings and millwork. They purchased the stock and equipment of All-Wood Schroeder in the early 1990's.

There were several Show and Tell items this month including a pine clock and great cedar and ash box by J.W. Anderson. Eltee Thibodeaux brought a Chinese inspired potpourri box. Lee Frazier showed the very last example of a child's swing made of cypress. He sold all of the other ones at a recent show for \$35 each. Gary Rock showed a box elder burl, natural edge bowl as well as a small bowl turned from redbud. See these great items and more at [www.lcwoodworkers.com](http://www.lcwoodworkers.com).

Dick Trough said that Home Depot often has a supply of maple/birch plywood for \$30 per sheet of 3/4 inch stock. Dick and others emphasized that plywood is not as consistent in terms of thickness as it once was. Variations can be 1/16th inch or more between suppliers or batches. In general, the Home Depot suppliers have consistent (though less than marked) thicknesses.

The maple/birch does not qualify as 'birdseye' but it comes close with lots of great figure.

Jimmy Everett described his experiences while he was in college working at a plywood mill. It was dangerous work in those days with periodic fires in the plant and even work-related deaths.

Modern plywood plants are much safer and we will attempt (through J.W. Anderson) to get a tour of a working plant sometime in the Spring of 2005.

A member mentioned that there is a historic wood mill near Forrest Hill, La. (perhaps it was Longleaf) which we will also try to arrange for a trip and tour. Apparently, it is associated with the Louisiana Forestry Association. Barry has contacted them to see about a possible tour in the Spring.

## PLANE IRON PROFILES

Not including molding or combination planes, there are four basic plane blade profiles: straight, round, crowned, and rounded corners. Which to use depends on the type of plane used and the planing task at hand.

Straight — for jointer, rabbet or shoulder planes. Without a straight cutting edge when using a jointer or shoulder plane, it is almost impossible to get a satisfactory glue line. While some distortion may sometimes be

acceptable in a rabbet, the main objective is to achieve two perpendicular surfaces with a sharp intersection. A straight edge is one of the easiest profiles for blade manufacturers to produce, but it's a challenge for woodworkers to maintain without an investment in dedicated equipment. Nonetheless, a bit of practice, freshly trued stones and a good honing guide will usually produce a satisfactory edge.

Round — this blade profile is desired when planing rough-sawn lumber by hand. Scrub planes are made specifically for this job, equipped as they are with a generously rounded blade profile. It is also quite practical to grind the required profile on a jack plane blade. A spare blade will typically cost much less than a dedicated plane.

Crowned — mostly for smooth planes, this profile may also be useful in a jack or fore plane when flattening a panel that is wider than the blade. The goal is to conceal overlapping strokes on a wide surface by having the middle portion of the blade project from the sole while the corners are safely out of the way. The resultant surface will have a series of broad, shallow, parallel flutes, but the panel will appear to be flat to all but the most careful observer. The degree of crown will depend on the width of the blade. While a similar depth of the curve will be desired, the same radius is not suitable for both a #4-1/2 heavy smoother (with a 2-3/8" wide blade) and a #3 small smoother (with a 1-3/4" wide blade). Ideally, the height of the crown will be slightly more than the intended shaving thickness (e.g., for fine smoothing this may be as little as 0.0015"). This profile is usually the easiest for a woodworker to produce since most stones (especially water stones) that have not been freshly trued will naturally produce a crowned blade. When working on a hard, flat, oil stone (such as a hard Arkansas), the crown can still be achieved by alternately applying more pressure on the corners.

Rounded Corners — According to many authorities on the subject, this is the best all-purpose profile for smoothing and jack planes because it ensures the maximum width of cut, allows overlapping strokes on a wide surface, and can still be used to dress the edge of a board for lamination. It is, however, a bit of a challenge to do well. All the requirements to sharpen a straight edge must be met, plus a smoothly rounded transition needs to be ground and honed on each corner or the edges of the blade will leave lines in the workpiece. There are no jigs sold for this process, so a bit of practice freehand grinding and honing is needed to get the profile just right.

*Don't forget the annual dues. This month is the best time to pay. Just bring yours to the next meeting or mail them to Dick Hopes, 1139 Green Rd, Lake Charles, 70611*