

Dick Truth, President
Joe Comeaux, Treasurer

Officers and Directors

Barry Humphus, Editor, Bubba Cherie
George Kuffel, John Marcon, 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 Truth: 583-2683. Each has years of experience and knowledge.

December Meeting Highlights

Chuck and Charlene Middleton's great shop was our meeting place this month. Chuck cooked us a real treat, spicy sausage on his grill. But there were lots more wonderful things to eat as well such as brownies, a variety of cookies and of course the ubiquitous donuts and coffee.

Chuck showed off his new pergola off the back door while telling the tale of falling off a ladder while he was attaching the cover. Chuck was still bruised and sore from this incident. This was significant as Jeff Cormier had a few words to say about ladder safety.

Jeff started his monthly safety discussion by talking about ladder safety and mentioned the fact that when ever possible, strap or tie the ladder to the structure you are working on. You see this done time and again when watching telephone or cable company repair people going up a ladder. The first thing they do when reaching the top is to strap the ladder to the pole. There are some basic things ladders must have, according to OSHA. Self-supporting (foldout) and non-self-supporting (leaning) portable ladders must be able to support at least four times the maximum intended load, except extra-heavy-duty metal or plastic ladders, which must be able to sustain 3.3 times the maximum intended load.

Jeff pointed out that wood ladders must not be coated with any opaque covering, such as paint, except identification or warning labels and stepladders must have a metal spreader or locking device to hold the front and back sections in an open position when in use.

For Show and Tell, Chuck showed a neat plywood carrier with wheels while Bob Theaux brought a wonderful little oak toy chest of red oak finished with golden oak ply. Bob said this was the fourth version of the chest.

J.W. Anderson had a really nicely designed plant stand of sweet gum. He said it started out as a rocker but when that didn't work out, he used the rocker legs to make the stand. Tom and Kay Bergstedt showed a brown pelican carved from a cypress knee.

Pie Sonnier brought one of his wonderful cars. This one was a Ford Model A in mesquite, black walnut, ebony and some mahogany. Ray Kibodeaux showed us a birch and cedar toy bird house finish in laquer.

Mr. Eltee Thibodeaux produced a push-pull oven rack puller plus a sweet little gift card holder while John Perry also showed us a over rack puller cleverly made to include a pot stirrer and paddle. John said he has made about 30 of these over the years.

Note that the January meeting will be at the shop of George Kuffel. The problem is the cold. Eltee's shop is not heated and we expect the temp to be in the high 20s by the time the meeting starts. George is out of town part of the week, but we were able to catch him between hunts.

Joe Comeaux had some nicely turned pens including one of ivory and one from a circuit board. Gary Rock brought some of his lovely tree ornaments of spalted elm, purple heart and sycamore. These are always a delight to see.

We were reminded that the annual area Woodworker Show is coming up April 16-18 at the Leonard E. Merrel Center. The facility is located at 6301 South Stadium Lane in Katy, TX. The cost is still just \$10 per day though you can purchase a multi-day ticket as well. To order tickets online, go to www.thewoodworkingshows.com and click on the link for Houston, TX. There will be over 30 firms and organizations represented besides the big tool companies such as Delta, Freud, Kreg and the like.

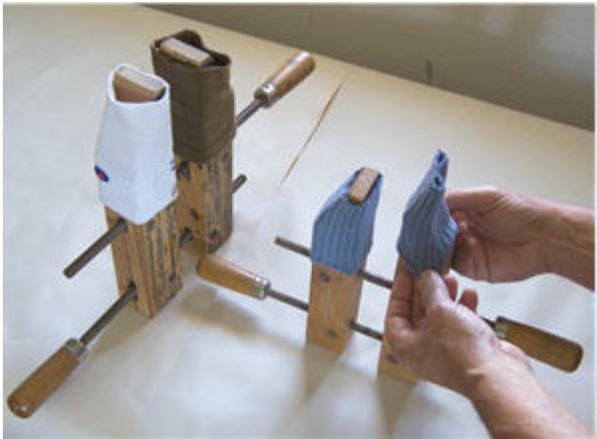
Annual Dues

It's actually that time of year again. The Lake Charles Woodworkers depends on your continued support to bring you great monthly meetings, terrific woodworking advice, problem solving and the monthly Newsletter. There is no better way to make your woodworking experience even better than by renewing your membership. Even though we have had some tough economic times, the cost is still just \$20 per year for a family membership. Send your check, payable to LCWW to Joe Comeaux, 1675 Campfire Rd., Lake Charles, LA 70611 or see Joe at a meeting.

Coming Up . . . Saturday, January 9, 2010 at the shop of George Kuffel where you will be warm and welcomed.

Clamp Scars - Dressing for Success

Ever lost a sock or had one with a blown out heel? I used to throw these away or use them for rags in my shop. They are



still used for rags but let me suggest another use for these orphans and cast-offs.

On those occasions when I'm building a case or even repairing my furniture or

someone else's, I need to clamp one or more pieces together. Generally I try to use Jorgenson style clamps whenever possible and bar or "C" clamps if needed. The problem I run into is that any of these can cause damage to the surface of the work piece.

To prevent those unsightly scars left by clamps, you need to dress them up. I cut off the foot and use the ankle portion as a protective sleeve over my handscrew clamp jaws. (I use the foot as a general shop rag as I have a hard time throwing anything away.) The sock slips easily over the jaw and never leaves a mark on the wood. *Barry Humphus*

Some Router Basics

Routers can do so much. From adding a profile to an edge to cutting dovetail joints and dados, a router is an incredibly versatile machine. But if you've never used one, routers can be intimidating.

When I first used one, I was intimidated. I was building a dining table in 1970 (which I still use) and had to make the joints for the connecting rails. I had never used a router but a work colleague had one and said I could bring over my wood and have at it. That was a scary thing to do as I was unfamiliar with the thing and at 24 years old, I was certainly a novice when it came to woodworking.

Today's routers can be divided into general two categories, fixed base and plunge base. On a fixed base router once the bit is in and the base is locked the bit is in a 'fixed' position, meaning its depth is set and will stay set. On a plunge base router the bit can be locked in the router, then plunged in and out of the material.

Since the base on a fixed base router can typically be removed, bit changes are generally easier on a fixed base

router than on a plunge router. Many woodworkers find micro-adjusting bit height easier on a fixed base router than a plunge router, which makes fixed base routers a popular choice for use with dovetail jigs, router tables, and other tools where bit depth can be fussy.

The big advantage of plunge routers is that, since they can plunge in and out of the material, you can easily make cuts with distinct starting and stopping points. This is useful when making mortises and dados. I also use a plunge router for making adjustable shelf holes in cabinets, and find it works much better than a drill.

If you're not quite sure which type of router would be best for you, have a look at multi-base router kits which are available from many manufacturers. Since the kits include a fixed base and a plunge base, they provide the best of both worlds. This give you lots of bang for your woodworking buck. Porter-Cable makes possibly the best of these with their venerable Model 6902 Plung Kit. Even if you have the great 6901, I can still get the add-on plung base from Porter-Cable.

If you have decided to make your first router a fixed base, the Porter-Cable 6901 can be an excellent choice. However, the most precise (and unfortunately discontinued) fixed-base router still remains the Sears Craftsman 315.17480. It's micro-adjusting feature, built-in light and D handle trigger arrangement make it one of the best (and safest) routers Sears has sold. You can still get one, but probably only on eBay. I have two of them (one used for parts).

Router bits are available in two shank sizes, 1/4-in. and 1/2-in. Given the choice, buy the bit with the 1/2-in. shank. There's little, if any, price difference between the two. And the larger shank gives you two advantages. It helps stabilize the bit under cutting pressure so you get less chatter, which means a nicer cut (read less sanding). It also gives the collet (the chuck that holds the bit) more surface to grab, so there's less chance of the bit coming loose.



So when you're router shopping you want to look for a machine that has both 1/4-in. and 1/2-in. collets. FYI, Continues Page 3

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you may come across some router bits that have an 8-millimeter shank. These are used with a 1/2-in. to 8-mm reducer inserted into a 1/2-in. collet.

The first step in changing router bits is making certain the router is unplugged. Additionally you'll make your life easier, and bust fewer knuckles, if you remove the router base when installing and removing bits. When installing a bit in the router, set it so 2/3 of the shank is inside the collet, then tighten the collet. Never tighten too much - hard but safe.

The last thing you want as you're routing your material is to have to chase it across the shop. It needs to be secure to your bench. One solution is to clamp your material in place, but the clamp often gets in the way of the router and has to be repositioned. My preference is to use a router mat which provides an excellent non-skid surface. With your project on the mat you can work around all four edges without interference. You can find router mats at some home centers and woodworking specialty stores.

Here's a couple of tips. If it seems like your mat is losing its grip, rinse it under water to get the dust out of it. That usually helps restore some of its grab. By the way, the mats are nothing more than rug holders. That is, the material that goes under an area rug that keeps it from slipping. So you can get a roll of this and likely less expensively than the products that are sold for dedicated anti-slip mats.

Don't even consider plugging the router in until you've got ear and eye protection on. Routers are very loud and enough to cause permanent damage to your hearing if you're not protected. And you should, of course, always wear eye protection when using power tools.

In order to safely use a router, you've got to move it in the right direction. When routing the outside edge of a board you should go counterclockwise. Going in the correct direction prevents the router from climb cutting and getting away from you (that was always the scary part for me) and when routing the inside edge of a frame move in a clockwise direction.

Finally, if you're routing all four edges of a board, it's important to make the cuts in the right sequence. Start on end grain. As the bit exits the end grain it may slightly chip the adjacent edge. When you rout that edge you'll automatically clean up any chipping.

By the way, there are maximum bits speeds to consider. The larger the bit, the slower you should go. For 1 inch or less, a safe speed is the maximum - 24,000 to 25,000 RPM. For 1.25" to 2", use 18,000. For 2.25" to 2.5", use 16,000 and for larger bits, use 12,000 RPM. *Barry Humphus*

Infiniter Laser Cutting Guide, Rockler #21574, \$25

Adding an aftermarket laser guide to your miter saw can really save time and reduce material waste. No more mystery of where the blade will cut. I recently added this great tool to my old Delta Sliding Compound Miter saw and it worked great.

The Infiniter is a small disk with an internal battery operated laser light that you mount to your miter saw's blade arbor. It replaces the outer washer of the arbor and lays flat against the saw blade.

Centrifugal force, created when the saw blade spins, activates the laser light beam. That beam of red light lands on your work piece marking the left side of the cut. The Infiniter produces a fine delicate line. I find the line it creates more accurate than older laser guides I've seen which produced wider and brighter lines. The trade off is: thin and accurate verses wide and brighter but not as accurate. You'll get the hang of how it all works after a few tests cuts. Note that the laser is only on when the blade is spinning. You do not know how satisfying this product can be until you have used it. On the first cut with the Infiniter installed, I made known cuts. That was all one can ask.

The Infiniter does not work on every saw. To find out if it will work on your saw, go to the Rockler web page, and check both the "Overview" and "More Info" tabs. If you're still in doubt, then give the folks at Rockler a call at 800-279-4441 and they will gladly help you. *Barry Humphus*

Nice Tool you Need

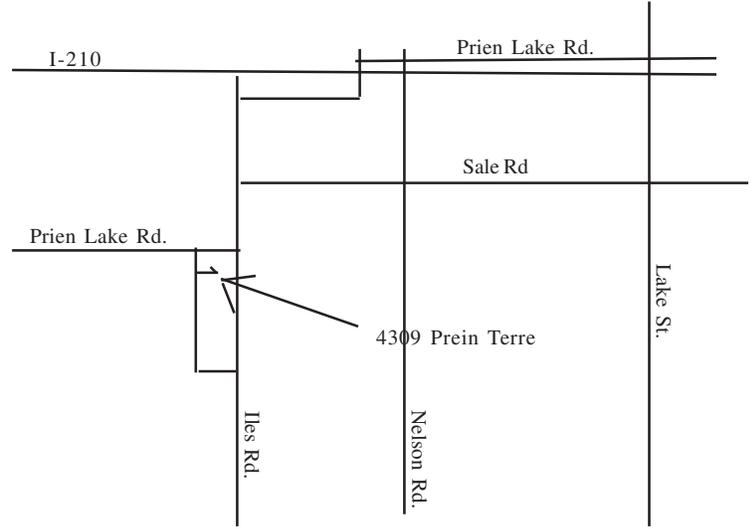
When I first saw the Black & Decker Rota-driver I wondered why I would ever need such a tool? I've owned dedicated cordless screwdrivers and never found them particularly useful, and my current array of cordless drill/drivers was performing well for my screw driving needs.

Even with all of my intrepidation, I decided to get a Rota-driver anyway. Lo and behold I found myself amazed by how useful this tool is. It's small, lightweight, has plenty of power, the battery charge lasts a long time, and the clutch works well. The Rota part means that you can you can shift it from left to right to get into really tight places. It lives up to its name since it's easily carried in an apron pocket. I use it to drive virtually every screw I install in my shop or home. It will easily drive 3-in. long #8 screws, but it's not a speed demon. If you need to drive a lot of long screws fast, you'll need to revert to a faster and more powerful driver. This is not a problem since most screws used in cabinet, furniture making and around the home are 1-1/4" or shorter. For less than \$25 at most places, this is a hit and a tool you will use frequently. *Barry Humphus*

January Meeting Location

George Kuffel is an experienced craftsman with many talents. He has built very fine furniture, particularly innovative woodworking jigs, is an experienced teacher, does wonderful fishing lures and is a fine marksman with few peers. If only I had taken a few of the many ducks he has brought down, my freezer would be full.

To get there, see the map at right or give him a call for more information at 337-478-2707. To get there from Lake Charles, follow Sale Rd. west to Prien Lake Rd. Turn left at the light and follow Prien Lake as it takes a right turn where it joins Iles Rd. Prien Terre is the first left and the first driveway on your left is George's drive at 4309 Prien Terre Rd.



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