

John Griffith, President  
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Officers and Directors

Barry Humphus, Editor, George Kuffel  
Gary Rock, Steve Thomas, Joe Comeaux

**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; Gary Rock: 433-1679; Eltee Thibodeaux: 436-1997; Dick Trough: 583-2683. Each have years of experience and knowledge.

**June Meeting Highlights**

Happy 4th of July! We trust that you had a great celebration of the Second Continental Congress's approval of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. Most folks believe that this was the date of the signing, but that began on Friday, August 2, 1776 and went over several days as all the folks that signed were not present and had to come to Philadelphia to do so. In fact, a couple of guys never signed it including John Dickinson and Robert Livingston. In any case, you can learn more at [www.history.com](http://www.history.com).

Most of this year, we are meeting at the wonderful Stines in Lake Charles and we all appreciate their allowing us to use their break room for our meetings. Be sure to shop after each meeting and always thank the great folks at Stines as you check out with your purchase.

This month we had a guest to join and that was Brannon Daughdril, a SOWELA graphics art student.

Other than an update on the health of Dick Trough (who is doing much better as we understand), we had no safety issue to discuss.

Ray Kibodeaux started off Show and Tell with a great mesquite and artificial turquoise stone medallion turned. Ray also had a beautiful 1940s Wards plane made by Stanley that he recently acquired on eBay. It was in brand new shape.

Mr. Eltee Thibodeaux had a Father's Day scroll plack plus a couple of child's rubber band guns (that were loaded!). J.W. Anderson showed us a 'Port' wood box plus one of

magnolia. He also has a Bosch Contractor saw for sale should you have an interest. Mitch Morgan had a very nice scroll oak ply cross piece plus one of birch ply.

New member Brannon Daughdril turns pens and had one of zebra plus a knife of the same. Steve Thompson blew us away with a bass guitar he recently finished including the case. It is a hop-over style in persimmon with the neck of laminated walnut and maple - wow.

Don Elfret showed off some great designs this month with a child's rocker in pine from a plan he got from Bob Thibodeaux. As a master designer, Don made modifications to the basic plan to make it better. He also had a great child's cargo truck from scrap wood.

Our main presentation this month was from Sonny LeBlanc, a retired engineer who now specialises in clocks and clock repair. Sonny told us about how to balance the movements and basic repair ideas. Should he ever do a course in this process, anyone owning an old clock should attend. Sonny provided so much great information about adjustments, balancing, lubricants (such as don't use 3-In-One oil) and more. Should you own or want to acquire an old clock for a project or have questions, Mr. Sonny LeBlanc is the guy.

Ray Kibodeaux won the Show and Tell gift card from Stines and well deserved.

Comimng Up . . . Saturday, July 9 at 9:00 A.M. Stines in Lake Charles Meeting Room.



## All About Teak

A year or so before Rita, my friend Carrie Christocame to me with a request to build her a replacement hatch for her sailboat. Carrie has been sailing for most of her life and in a previous carrier, she captined large new sailboats from where they were built on the East Coast to their new owners in the Caribbean. She wanted to replace the old hatch cover with a new one made of teak.

Teak take a long journey from where it is grown and even the harvesting of the wood is an odd story. Teak harvesting begins with the girdling of selected trees deep in a Southeast Asian rainforest. This allows the timbers to die and dry on the stump over a period of years, making them tons lighter at logging time. The drying also allows the logs to float. Because of the terrain and its remoteness, elephants play a major role, moving the massive logs miles to a river. There, the teak lies for months, awaiting monsoon rains to fill the banks so it can float from the interior. In traditional forest harvesting, this seasonal reliance often results in a five-year delivery time.

Teak (*Tectona grandis*), a native species in the rain forests of Burma, India, Laos, and Thailand, now grows in about 40 countries throughout the tropics. In Java, for instance, teak was planted generations ago, and the trees are managed for sustained yield. Naturally occurring teak grows to heights of 100' and diameters of 12' or more in about 300 years. Plantation-grown teak gets taller, but never as large in circumference, although it can be harvested in 60 years.

If size alone didn't distinguish teak from other rainforest trees, its enormous leaves would. They can measure a whopping 24x36", and their top surface is rough enough to sand with!

Teak has a thin layer of yellow sapwood, but it's never seen by woodworkers. Importers and dealers instead favor boards of only coarse-textured, golden-brown heartwood. Teak, though, depending on its growing conditions, may have a greenish tint, small stripes of yellow and darker colors, or an occasional mottle figure. At about 40 pounds per cubic foot dry, teak (when dried) weighs slightly less than oak.

Silica, which the growing tree extracts from the ground and distributes throughout the wood, gives teak an oily feeling and causes finishing problems. I found that freshly sawed boards also carry the aroma of old shoe leather.

The Burmese set the grading and pricing standard for teak more than 100 years ago. That's why teak's price goes up with the width and length of the board. For instance, First European Quality teak boards 1" thick will be at least 8" wide and bring a premium of \$8 or more per board foot. Narrower boards cost less.

Prime teak-faced plywood runs considerably more than red oak or cherry panels, but at around \$85, falls below the cost of walnut. Veneer prices fall into the \$1.50 per square foot range of most imported species.

Because teak does vary in color according to its origin, try to buy all the boards you need for your project from the same shipment so the overall tone of your project will be uniform. When working this wood, keep these tips in mind.

In spite of its hardness, teak rips and crosscuts more easily than oak. Always use carbide blades. Teak poses no routing problems, but it quickly dulls bits.

With proper woodworking drill bits and high speed, you can put clean holes in this wood without breakout. Sanding teak requires frequent stops to clear its sticky dust away with a stiff brush. Caution: Some people have an allergic reaction to teak dust.

Epoxy or resorcinol adhesives work best when joining teak. But first scrub all wood to be joined with acetone, and then let it dry.

Finishing teak poses the most difficulty. The wood doesn't take stain exceptionally well, and traditional clear finishes (except lacquer) can be a problem. For instance, regular polyurethane won't set up. But two-part polyurethane, the type for marine use, will. That's why teak is frequently coated with a penetrating oil, such as tung or teak.

For outdoor use, teak doesn't require a finish, only an occasional scrubbing with soap and water to clean the surface. The wood will eventually weather to a pleasing gray color.

Teak ranks high in hardness, but you can carve it with chisels and a mallet. Except for its tendency to dull tools, teak turns exceptionally well in response to shearing cuts. Some teak, though, primarily from India, may be somewhat brittle and coarse-textured, causing chipping or splintering.

The boat hatch came out really nice but required lots of preparation. The old teak had to be removed and the holes it left in the fiberglass repaired and filled with epoxy.

As this was basically a veneering job, the thin strips were relatively easy to bend over the curve of the hatch and attach with epoxy. At each end the strips were inserted into a groove in the end pieces.

When completed, the hatch was installed on the sailboat and looked great.

The end story was not so great for the sailboat. During Rita, the boat was blown from it's morings at the Lake Charles Yacht Club onto the railroad tracks. The hatch survived! Barry Humphus

### Practice Makes You Proficient

Wanna become a star third baseman for a Major League Baseball team? It's easy. Go buy a baseball glove and show up at the stadium. How about a talented heart surgeon? Piece of cake. Buy the board game Operation and sign on at the Mayo Clinic.

Is this how you make it in the real world? Of course not. In the real world, success comes only after developing your skills through hard work, practice, and study. Why, then, do so few woodworkers see the value of practice? Or do you "practice by building" projects?

Think about it. Say you have a project that begs for dovetails. The last time you cut a set -- by hand or machine -- was a little more than a year ago. Even if you're sure the chisels are honed or the jig is properly set up, would you have the confidence to put the blade or bit to a stack of gorgeously figured maple, quartersawn white oak, or flawless mahogany boards?

Some woodworkers do; others don't. Some succeed; others realize that something was not quite right only after gaps, chip-out, or complete miscuts turn those precious timbers into scrapwood. It's not carelessness or a lack of skill. More often than not, woodworkers who fail simply need to be more comfortable with the task.

That's why I advocate practicing your woodworking skills, even if for only a few minutes a day. With just a few plain, low-cost boards of poplar, pine, or whatever is cheap and plentiful, you can vastly improve the quality of your work.

In my shop, I'll frequently clamp a poplar board in the vise and cut a row of straight lines with a dovetail saw. I'm not building anything, just trying to get the feel for the saw cutting, focusing on my arm movement to ensure the saw follows the layout line. The first five or ten minutes of shop time go toward warm up, and then I spend another ten or fifteen minutes at the end of a shop session readying boards for the next practice round.

It may seem boring and repetitive at first (and my wife sometimes looks askance at this "unproductive exercise") but once I get the feel of things, the practice helps sharpen my concentration, develops muscle memory, and puts me in the right frame of mind to work in the shop.

No matter how talented they are, good performers always take the time to practice. Athletes put in training time, even in mid-season, to hone their skills. Musicians tune their instruments and practice chords and progressions every day between concerts. Even professional airline pilots spend time in a simulator to stay sharp and keep their certifications current.

Once you understand this essential need for practice, taking the time to hone your woodworking skills doesn't sound odd at all. In fact, the only things that should be sharper than your chisels are your woodworking skills.

More photos from our last meeting

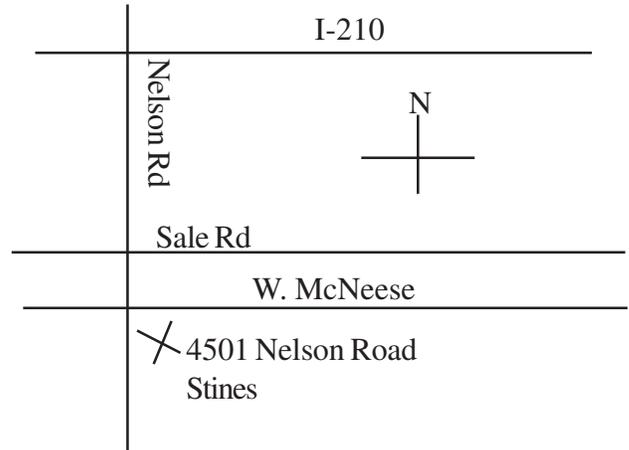


### July Meeting Location

We have the wonderful opportunity to meet at the Stines Lake Charles location at 4501 Nelson Road. Please enter the store and go to the back left in the store to the meeting room.

To get there go South on Nelson Road in Lake Charles going from I-10 or I-210 and turn into the parking lot. Go to the back of the main entrance to the very back to the meeting room to find us.

Please take an opportunity to explore Stines before you leave to find the items for your shop or home that you may need. As always, thank the folks at Stines as you check out.



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