

Steve Thomas, President
Joe Comeaux Treasurer

Officers and Directors

Barry Humphus, Editor, George Kuffel
Gary Rock, Jeff Cormier, Dick Trough

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.

February Meeting Highlights

Steve Thomas hosted the meeting again this month and it's always a great shop to visit. Steve mentioned that Joe Comeaux had a mild heart attack but is up and going strong.

Steve also mentioned a list of top 10 woodworking safety tips as his safety discussion. Someone also mentioned a product they find useful -- LA's Totally Awesome cleaner (available at Dollar General) that works very well to clean and degrease almost anything. The cleaner is non-toxic and biodegradable.

Steve reminded us that the months of June, August, October and November are still open dates. We need a few of you to step up and have a meeting at your place. As the first few are hot months, it is always nice to have a meeting in an air conditioned space.

There was a discussion and vote on the style and color celebrating the 25th year anniversary of the Lake Charles Woodworkers Club. Barry supplied Steve with the LCWW logo. The knitted shirt style will be with a collar and light grey in color with the LCWW logo. You are going to look very sharp in these shirts!

How about \$50 in your pocket? Weststat.com is a research company working under contract with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission that needs our advise as woodworkers. They are conducting a

survey on table saw safety for the Commission. They are willing to pay you for your information and experience. If you own a table saw that was manufactured in 2009 or later, you can complete the survey and get a check for \$50. Barry will bring the information brochures they are sending to the March meeting. If you are unable to attend this month

but still want to participate in the survey, email lcwoodworkers@gamil.com and Barry will get you the information.

Steve Thomas also talked about maintaining paint brushes and this is something that we all may consider. We all use paint brushes from time to time and his advice is appropriate. Paint brushes that are tapered generally provide a more accurate and finer brush stroke than ones with a flat tip. Also, the wider the brush, the more paint it will hold. Poly-nylon brushes work well with water-based (latex) paints while natural brushes work best with oil-based paint. More in a later article.



Show and Tell started off with Eltee Thibodeaux showing us some of his wonderful scroll work followed by Mike Dupuis' nice pecan pie plate that was segmented and assembled using wipe-on poly as the finish. He also had a nice spalted magnolia bowl, wet sanded with 4 coats of poly and a pair of wine goblets from pecan.. Ray Kebodeaux brought a nice mahogany coffee cup with a deer antler handle. John Griffin continues to impress us with his veneer designs and this one was a jazz motif and created with his home-made vacume press. George Carr had a cottenwood carving of a spirit face. Dustin Guidry built a neat wine box that raises the bottles when opened and has a slot in the bottom for wine glasses. Pie Sonnier got creative with a nice "gate" style picture frame in walnut. Steve Thomas has done another of his creative and wonderful large kaleidoscopes that has both a crank to rotate it but a light to show off the designs inside. These are always amazing. Mark Underwood brought us a gorgeous walnut mesquite bowl while Gary Rock has turned a great set of round ball objects of oak. Let's play Baseball!

Coming Up . . . Saturday, March 14, 2015, 9:00 A.M. at the shop of Pie Sonnier. This a great place to be this month. Come see the great things that Pie has done. You will be amazed with his great work.



Sulphur Mine Festival March 13-14

They are looking for artists (woodworkers as well) to be featured in the upcoming festival. They have booth spaces that are 10 x 10 ft available to artists for \$50. The event will be on March 13th and 14th. Set up time on Friday will be around 10 A.M.. The event will open at 12 P.M. If you have any questions please feel free to call Eric Manual at 337-527-0357.

Maintaining Your Paint Brushes

We have them and we abuse them but here is how to keep a paint brush for ten years or more as Steve Thomas has. Your brushes are an investment. By cleaning them thoroughly and properly at the end of a painting session, they will last longer.

First, wipe off any excess paint using a cloth or soft tissue. Gently squeezing the bristles from the ferrule edge outwards with your fingers, or with a cloth, will help remove paint from the brush. But be careful to avoid pulling on the bristles.

Rinse the brush in turpentine or oil if you've been using oil-based paint or alternatively lukewarm water if you've been using a water-based paint medium. Never use hot water as it can expand the ferrule, causing the hairs to fall out. Then, wipe it on the cloth again to remove the last of the excess paint.

Wash gently using a little bit of mild soap (or a gentle dishwashing liquid). Dab the brush gently onto the piece of soap, then work up a lather in a small container (or the palm of your hand if you're Not using any toxic pigments or solvents).

Rinse and repeat until there's no trace of any color coming out. Over time a brush may become stained, but don't stop rinsing until you're sure there's no paint left. Rinse once more in clean, lukewarm water to remove any traces of soap. Shake off the water.

Use your fingers to gently shape the brush head into its correct shape. If necessary, wrap the bristles in a piece of tissue or toilet paper while the brush is still wet. When the paper dries it'll contract, pulling the bristles into shape.

Leave the brush to dry at room temperature. Ensure it's not resting on its head as it will then dry misshapen. Standing it on the back of the handle works well. If you're worried about the toxicity of the paint you're working with, wear gloves while painting and cleaning your brushes. Also if you find the paint is drying out and cracking, or staining your skin.

Always use separate brushes for oil painting and water-based medium. After all, oil repels water. Also use separate brushes for varnish, gesso, and masking fluid. Don't let acrylic paint dry on a brush as its water-resistant when

dry. But also never leave a brush standing in water.

Never use a lot of pressure to force paint out of a brush. Be patient and rinse it several times. If your brush is made from natural bristle, you can soften it by dipping it in clean oil (the one you use as a medium) after you have cleaned it. Misshapen synthetic brushes can sometimes be reshaped by soaking them in hot water (not boiling).

A couple of other tips are good. You can comb through your brushes with a comb and the best is a Flea comb as this is very fine and works well in terms of dragging out any paint. or product. Steve Thomas suggested that you should not wash a brush by running water from the the top of the brush as this forces paint into the ferrule (heel) of the brush.

Oil-based brushes are generally made of natural hair including Ox hair, Camel hair, Boar hair or even Squirrel hair (for the finest brushes that some artists use). Water-based brushes, generally made of nylon/poly materials are sometimes also good for oil-based paint products but always check the manufacturer's label. Like paint, the higher the cost almost always suggests a better product.

If, when you clean a paint brush, you don't bother to get all the paint out of the bristles, the paint will dry in the brush and stiffen it. Yes, it can be tedious to get the last little bits out of the bristles near the ferrule, but think about it how much paint will accumulate if you leave a little every time you half-heartedly clean a brush.

If you're using cheap brushes and can afford to replace them regularly, then you certainly don't need to bother with cleaning all the paint out of a brush. But if you're on a budget, or use expensive brushes, then it's worth the time spent.

Take a Bath

You know what a bath is like when you first get in -- lovely and warm, relaxing and refreshing. But after a while the water gets cold and your skin gets all wrinkly, so you get out. So now why do you think your paint brush likes to be left to soak for extended periods? Even if it isn't nasty water or turpentine or oil, it's not a great idea.

For starters, the brush is resting on its bristles, which are the most valuable and delicate part of the thing that you have purchased. Then the water is soaking into the wood of the handle and the glue that holds the bristles in... While it takes extended abuse for the ferrule to loosen and the glue to dissolve, why risk it with a decent brush that you have and paid for? Your brushes are an investment. By cleaning them thoroughly and properly at the end of a painting session, they will last longer.

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If you stand your brush up on the wooden handle, then the water that's in the hairs will run from the hairs into the wood. The risk with this is that the wood, as it gets wet, expands, and so can loosen the ferrule. If this happens, it means the brush hairs aren't held as tightly, so they are likely to fall out as you paint.

You can buy brush holders that hang the brush by the handle without the hairs touching the surface; alternately wrap an elastic band around the brush handle and hang it from a hook, or leave them flat to dry (the handle should keep the hairs off the surface).

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Scrubbing paint on with a brush is very harsh on the bristles. It bends them out against the brush ferrule, and with extended abuse the brush will be reluctant to reshape itself into its 'normal' shape.

Keep an old brush for doing this, or buy a cheap one. Don't waste your expensive sable/boar/horse or squirrel brush by using it for this.

Which is the harder part of a brush, the handle or the bristles? If you want to store your brushes upright (and it's certainly a convenient way to have them close, put them into a container so they're standing on their handles, not the soft bristles. This applies regardless of the size or type of the brush.

When you've finished washing a brush, use your fingers to guide the bristles into the 'normal' shape of the brush. If they don't want to co-operate, take a piece of tissue or even toilet paper and wrap this around the bristles while the brush is still damp. As it dries, it'll contract and help reshape the brush.

Now let's clean them. First get some paint thinner, turpentine, or mineral spirits—ideally you should already have some on hand to mix with linseed oil for painter's medium presuming that you are using an oil-based paint medium. Pour a little bit of the thinner into a small container which you can seal up afterward; you'll be able to use the same amount of thinner for a long time.

You're also going to need some liquid soap—I use regular hand soap most of the time, but I've also used Mona Lisa Pink Soap in the past and they both work well. The

Pink Soap has some bristle conditioner mixed in, so it may prolong the life of your brushes better than regular hand soap.

Of course, you won't need the thinner or soap until you get all the excess paint out of your brushes. Here's where a little finger strength comes in handy. Take your brush with one hand and a piece of newspaper with the other, wrapping the newspaper around the metal part of the brush. You can also use a so-called Flea Brush to carefully scrape out any paint in the bristles.

Then, just squeeze as tightly as possible, starting right at the base of the bristles, while pulling the brush back through your fingers. Get as much paint as you can out of the brush. Go ahead and do it a few times, and especially try to remove all the paint that's stuck close to the ferrule (the metal part of the brush.)

You should end up with splotches of paint all over your newspaper and a lot less of the paint left in your brush. Next, take your brush over to the small container of paint thinner and dip it in, scrubbing across the bottom of the container to loosen more paint.

Repeat the squeezing technique with more newspaper, but be warned that it can get a little messier this time around since your brush will have picked up a lot of the liquid thinner. You should see a quite a bit more color flowing out of the bristles however.

Once you've squeezed out the thinner a few times your paintbrush will probably have a little more of its original color back, but there'll still be a paint stain left from the oils. To finish cleaning the brush, pump some liquid soap into the palm of one hand and hold the paintbrush with your other.

Scrub the brush back and forth across your palm, letting the soap penetrate the bristles to pull out more oil pigment. When the soap gets too contaminated by the paint, rinse both your hand and the brush with water, then get more soap and begin scrubbing again. Repeat the process until the soap doesn't change color in your palm, proving that there's no more oil paint stuck in the brush. (NOTE: If you're concerned about possible absorption of Cadmium into your skin during this stage, feel free to use disposable gloves.) Rinse out all the soap and use your newspaper one last time to get most of the water out of the bristles.

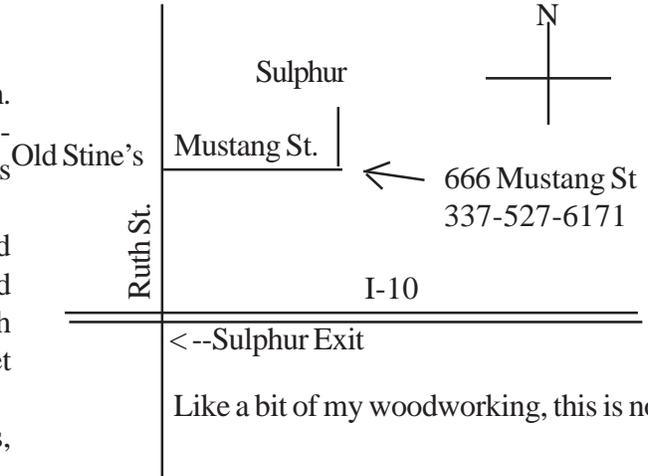
It's important to clean your brushes immediately after you finish painting, even when you're tempted to let them sit for a day or two. Letting them soak in paint thinner isn't a good alternative either; it will just weaken the glue holding the bristles in place. Although it may seem like a lot of effort, good care and cleaning of your brushes will help them last longer and stay functional throughout their lifespan—keeping you from the frustration of using worn out tools, and ultimately saving you money.

March Meeting Location

The shop of Pie Sonnier will be our meeting place this month. It's always great to go there and admire his wonderful collection of beautiful vehicle constructions with cars, planes and automobiles and much more.

To get there, take I-10 to the main Sulphur exit and turn North onto Ruth Street. Travel to Mustang Drive and turn East. Go to the end of Mustang Street and turn left (North again) and Pie's shop is at the corner at 666 Mustang Street and Lightning St.

Should you have any questions about directions, please call Pie (AKA Ralph) at 337-527-6171.



March 2015

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