

Chuck Middleton, President
Dick Hopes, Sec/Treasure

Officers and Directors

John Marcon, Barry Humphus,
Brent Evans, George Kuffel

SEPTEMBER MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Not alot of meeting this month but the Millenium Park Project got off to a terrific start. The LCWW members participating took advantage of their skills to assist the Park project in putting together a facility that all of the Southwest Louisisna can enjoy. We saw Ray Krull, Robin Richard, Gene Young, Dick Hopes, Bubba Cheramie, John Fontenot and Barry Humphus at the construction site. There were others that we did not see as there were well over 1,000 people at the site that morning.

Several days prior to our regular meeting, the ground work was done: grading and setting the major structural elements in place. Over 5,500 area residents were on tap and the Park came together under the leadership of the Committee and all of the fine people who volenteeded.

After meetings with the Committee, the LCWW ordered wood and constructed the cypress signs displayed on the various features of the Park. Chuck and Charleene Middleton, while simultaineously organizing a wedding, spent time creating Intarsia icons for the History Wall. Bubba Cheramie, Brent Evans, Dick Hopes, Barry Humphus, George Kuffel and Burl Vincent spent some 200 total man-hours constructing the 35 signs that identify the stations of the Park including one for the LCWW.

The signs were made from 4/4 cypress purchased from Acadia Cypress and Hardwood. Acadia donated most of their profit to the cause and delivered the wood to Burl Vincent's shop on August 29th.

Work on the signs began that evening when the sign committe gathered to joint the 8 foot boards. Brent took them home and did the cross cutting and rosette making for the signs. Beginning that Saturday, the sign group turned out at Burl's fine shop to construct the signs.

The most tedious part was cutting the lettering in each sign — Brent and Dick did the lettering while Bubba, Barry, Burl and George did the assembly and glue-up. It turned out that it took about 1 hour per sign including routing the letters, glue-up and a trip though a band-saw and router table to finish each one.

The signs measure 24" to 30" by 18" and are jointed with biskets. We used moisture-resistant Tite Bond II glue. They were taken to Classic Doors in Iowa where Robert Inman ran them through their power sander for the final finish. Then we discovered a problem.

To get the backs and the front of the signs to specification, a lot of wood had to be removed from the surfaces. This resulted in some signs being too shallow. That is, the wood taken off the surface made the lettering not deep enough. What we did is to re-do some of the signs.

We got more cypress from Burl Vincent shop, cut it to length and transported the wood to Bubba's shop. At Bubba's we had to planed down Burl's 5/4 cypress to 4/4 thickness.



While closely examining the completed signs, we found a few that had flaws sufficient to require re-doing. Those that had shallow lettering were cut down, re-lettered and re-assembled with new cypress. We did this on Saturday from 11:00 a.m to 6:30 p.m. at the shop of Bubba Cheramie. Thanks Bubba!

The last and final sign was a challenge as well. First, it was large and had to include the US Unwired logo. Chuck Middleton cut out all the letters from the design we had. George Kuffel took the lumber to Classic Doors for sanding and on September 16, George, Brent and Barry arrived at George's shop to complete the work. We screwed and glued for some 5 hours and delivered the large sign to the Park at about 3:00 p.m. On Sunday, the last day, the sign makers assembled at the Park to receive thanks for all of the fine work.



TIME TO RENEW

The Lake Charles Woodworkers Club is having a great year. We've heard from a sign maker and we've made signs for the Millenium Park, a tour and demonstration by Classic Doors, Gene Young's precision work, Home Depot, the LeGrues, a great BBQ, Richard Johnson, Julian Dondis, the Millenium Park and much more.

So it's that time of year when we ask the you renew your membership so we can continue to bring you the things you want — woodworking.

Just mail your check for \$20.00 to Treasurer Dick Hopes at 1139 Green Road, Lake Charles, LA 70611. Your family membership includes discounts from area wood and hardware firms, an informative monthly newsletter, education about wood and the tips and tricks of woodworking from your colleagues.

And just wait until the real Milenium — a tour of a mill, more presentations by experts, door prizes and good fellowship. Please mail your check today and renew.

COMING UP.....

October 14, Saturday — Harrison Paint Co. 9:15 A.M.

SERIES ON WOODS

Over the next several months, we're going to give you information on a variety of useful woods. They'll go alphabetically, so if you want information on Zebra wood, just be patient, we'll get there. In general, we'll describe the wood, show a photo of the tree it comes from and give you as many characteristics and uses as we have time and space in the newsletter.

BEECH: AN AMERICAN HERITAGE

Long ago, English bodgers crafted the legs of Windsor chairs from beech trees they felled in the forest. The long-wearing wood also became peasant footwear in the shape of shoes and clogs. In the iron smelters of Germany, France, and England, beech was the fuel.



The vast beech forests that once covered large parts of Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, and central Michigan were familiar to early European immigrants and travelers. But westward-moving pioneers in the new land discovered that the American beech grew in the choicest soils. So with ax and saw, they felled the trees to plant crops. In doing

so, they destroyed the nut crop of the then numberless passenger pigeon. This move, combined with mass hunting, spelled the pigeon's extinction.

Today, although the blanketing beech forests are gone, the tree remains plentiful throughout its range (North-East and East-Central US). Its hard, pliable, strong, and pretty wood, however, primarily furnishes stock for paper. That's because kiln-drying beech in commercial quantities has its pitfalls. Yet, some beech does become wooden ware and furniture parts, as well as barrels for aging beer.

Uses: Because beech steam-bends as readily as ash, it works well for chair legs and backs. In fact, this under-used wood could be made into any type of interior furniture, cabinets, flooring, and trim. As drawers, beech actually becomes slicker as it rubs against other wood members.

Wood turners use beech for items such as goblets with delicate stems. It's also ideal for food-use vessels like cutting boards and spoons because it imparts no odor or taste, and takes abuse. Carvers, though, find it difficult to tackle.

Beech may not fill a bin at your hardwood retailer, especially if you live far from its range. However, the large suppli-

ers that carry this hardwood normally offer it at a price below that of hard maple. And, you may find it in long boards up to 12" wide, but usually not as plywood.

Slow-grown beech from the northern part of its range will give you the most woodworking satisfaction because of its tighter grain. But avoid stock that's only air-dried or you'll invest as much work getting rid of warp, twist, checking, and discoloration as you will making parts. Otherwise, work the wood using the following tips.

Beech's hardness sometimes means chipping or tearout when planing or jointing with revolving cutterheads. If this happens, try reversing the board and taking a shallower cut. Deciding on grain direction when feeding the jointer can be a problem because of the evenness of beech's grain. If it gets confusing, simply set the table height for a 1/16" cut and proceed. If there's no tearout, gradually increase the cut to 1/8".

Nearly as dense as hard maple, beech requires ripping with a rip-profile blade of 24 teeth or fewer to prevent dust buildup and burning in the kerf. Don't try to feed the wood any faster than the blade wants to cut it, and use your saw's splitter to defeat binding.

Depend on a fine-toothed cross cut blade to cut beech to length, again to prevent burning. When drilling beech, back the bit out frequently to clear the hole. This avoids burning, especially in end grain. Ballbearing pilots on your router bits and slow feed will eliminate burning. So will shallow passes across the grain.

Beech works well with all glues. Detect squeezeout by wiping along the joint with paint thinner. Because of beech's hardness, always predrill for fasteners. Unlike maple, beech won't blotch when stained, and you can stain it to resemble other woods, particularly cherry. You'll find that beech accepts all types of finishes equally well. If you have stock with a distinct ray fleck, enhance it with clear penetrating oil.

Turning: An excellent turning wood, beech presents few problems other than its hardness, which results in scratches if sanding is done across grain on the lathe. Always sand with the grain while the lathe is turned off.

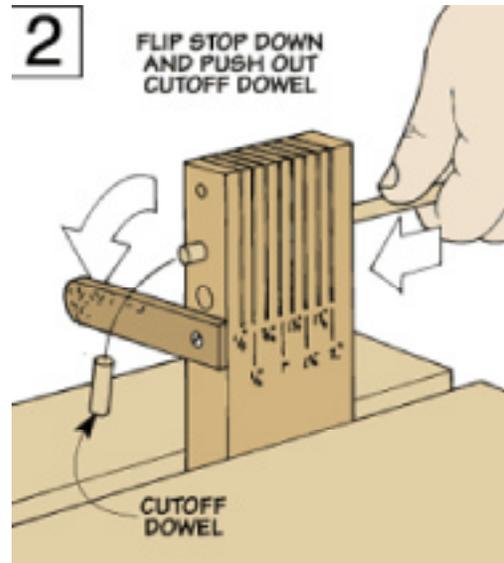
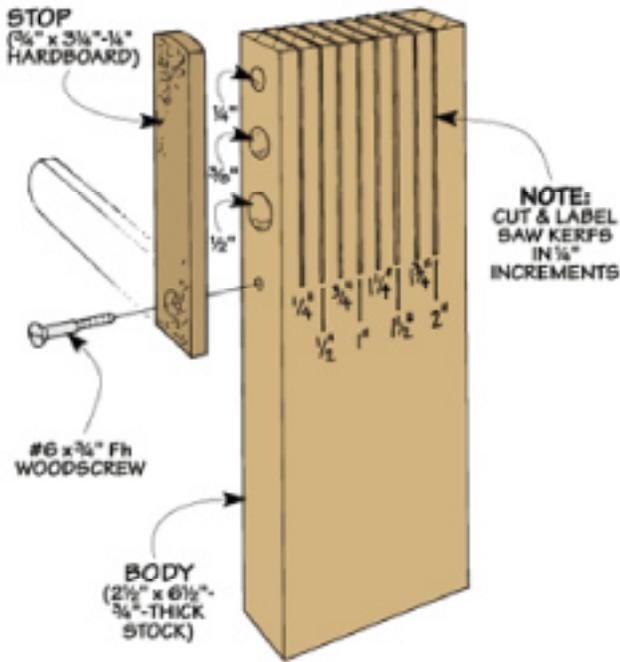
Uses: For stability in use, always work wood with a maximum moisture content of 8 percent, with 6 percent preferable. Feed straight-grained wood into planer knives at a 90° angle. To avoid tearing, feed figured wood or that with twisted grain at a slight angle of 15°, and take shallow cuts of about 1/32". For clean cuts, rip with a rip-profile blade that has 24-32 teeth. For crosscutting, use a blade with about 40 teeth. Avoid drilling with twist drills. In wood, they tend to wander off the mark as well as cause breakout. Use a backing board under the workpiece.

Drill pilot holes for screws. Rout with sharp, preferably carbide-tipped, bits and take shallow passes to avoid burning. Carving hardwoods generally means shallow gouge bev-els—15° to 20°—and shallow cuts. From Wood Online.



GREAT DOWEL JIG

Here's a jig that will make "short work" of accurately cutting dowels into small pieces with a hand saw.

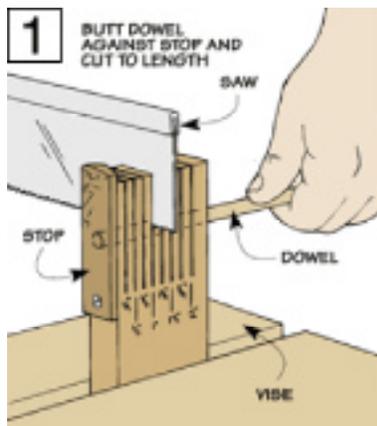


More on the Signs the LCWWC Built for the Millenium Park



Chuck Middleton shows his Intarsia work at the Design Tent

It can be used on three common sizes of dowels (1/4", 3/8" and 1/2"). And the dowels are cut without any splintering, in lengths from 1/4" to 2" long.



Best of all, the jig is easy to make and it has just two parts: a hardwood body and a hardboard stop that pivots on a screw.

To make the jig, first drill three holes along the edge of the body.

Then cut the kerfs out with a back saw. Each kerf is labeled so you can quickly establish the length of the dowel you want to cut. Then I attach the stop to the jig with a woodscrew.

Another nice thing about this jig is that it's easy to use. Start by clamping it in a vise. Then with the stop in the up position, insert the dowel into the jig until it butts up against the stop. Finally, slip the saw blade in the appropriate kerf and cut the dowel to length, see Figure 1. To retrieve the dowel, just flip the stop down and push the cutoff dowel out from the end of the jig, see Figure 2.



Brent Evans, Bubba Cheramie, Chuck Middleton, Barry Humphus, George Kuffel, Dick Hopes and Burl Vincent (not pictured) show their work