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

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 Trouth: 583-2683. Each have years of experience and knowledge.

August Meeting Highlights

Jeff and Mary Cormier's great shop was our August meeting place. It is always great to be there as we have good attendance and of course great ideas. Never miss Mary's tasty biscuits.

Once again the issues of table saw safety was discussed. It is the cause of the vast majority of shop injuries. Guest Scott Pias mentioned his table saw mishap. One of the keys that Steve Thomas mentioned in his safety talk was to never work when tired. Most every study of accidents, wherever in a shop or even on the shop floor of a plant show that as little mistakes or small injuries happen, it is time to think through what you are doing or how it is being done. Small errors lead to larger errors in the situation of power tool use. If you make a few small mistakes, perhaps that is the best time to walk away from the project for a while.

Richard Couvillion received the shadow box (red oak, locked miter with poly finish) for the late founding member Jim Couvillion. The lock miter bits are tricky to set up said Steve Thompson but worth the effort as it gives great gluing surface. Steve and others described the setup.

Steve also discussed the artificial spalting process. While there are many ways to spalt wood, one recipe is 2-quarts water, 2-large scoops of miracle grow, 2-cans beer

(drink one and put the other in the "brew"), 1-quart horse manure, doesn't have to be fresh, but the ammonia (a few ounces of straight ammonia will do should you not have access to horse manure) odor should still be

there when it gets wet, 1-quart dries oak leaves
Add more beer water if you want it to be a thinner mixture.

We also had a brief discussion of wood dust masks and there was a suggestion to acquire dental masks for filter

purposes. While general dust collectors do a pretty good job, should you be concerned with wood dust (and you should), the best solution is of course the air induction system sold by many companies that completely isolate you from wood dust.

For our Show and Tell, Mr. Eltee Thibodeaux started with a photo of a coffee table he built. Pie Sonnier did an incredible drilling rig of cherry, purple heart, walnut and more and truck construction to haul the rig. Ray Kibodeuax did us a great keepsake box with a flocked inside using a bird mouth bit for the jointery. The finish was special as he did wet sanding from 220 to 600 grit.

Scott Pias brought us a cherry chair and discussed a bit about chair making including the web sites that help with this. and a chair making school, the seat was woven hickory bark. The wood was steam bent wlnut and his spoke shaving. Dr. Elfret had a pine bench for an outdoor application of treated pine.

Gary Rock did a spalted sugar gum bowl with leather lace and a high gloss finish. He also did a Spanish cedar piece with lots of cavities and in pecan looking like a money bag with leather trim.

Our president, Steve Thomas did a mahogany, coffee nut and maple segmented vase in a poly finish that was beautiful plus a photo of a large book case in two parts for delivery.

Coming Up . . . The great place in the country at J.W. and Velma Anderson's wonderful place. Staring at 9:00 A.M. on Saturday, September 14. Yall come.

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Excellerated Spalting

Nearly all wood will spalt when the conditions are right. If you live in an area where there is a lot of leaf mold on the ground, you can seal the ends of the wood when it is cut in the spring, seal the ends with AnchorSeal, throw it under a tree, wait until next fall, and the wood will be spalted.

Some of the best spalted Maple that I have seen came from trees that were felled in the spring just after the leaves started coming out, and then left where they lay until all of the leaves had died and fell off in the late summer to early fall. The free water had been drawn into the leaves and evaporated, and spalting had started. You almost have to own your own woodlot to do this, but I recommend trying it.

If you don't live in or own a wooded area, or you are in a dry climate, then there are ways that you can duplicate the natural environment that encourages the growth of the little things that we see as spalting. The objective is to create the same environment and conditions that cause spalting inside of a plastic bag.

The following brew has all of the nutrients available for almost anything that wants to grow on and in the wood - nitrogen, organics, ammonia, sugars, tannins, and leaf molds.

2-quarts water
2-large scoops of miracle grow
2-cans beer (drink one and put the other in the "brew")
1-quart horse manure, doesn't have to be fresh, but the ammonia odor should still be there when it gets wet.
1-quart dries oak leaves
Add more beer water if you want it to be a thinner mixture.

There are some substitutions that can be made. I have used packaged steer manure from the garden store and added 1/2-cup of household ammonia. Don't use the sudsing ammonia because it contains detergents that will kill the growth.

All leaves contain some amount of tannin, but oak leaves contain more than the others. I have also used last years maple, alder, sweet gum, and apple leaves, but 3-times more of them, and then added more beer and water to make up for the additional leaves, and the results were the same.

Like natural spalting, the artificial spalting also works best if the wood is cut in the Spring when the sap is up and the free-water is at its highest level in the wood. Put the wood in a trash compactor bag (they are heavier) when it is fresh cut and still wet. If the ends have dried, saw off a slice to open up the wet wood. Apply a liberal amount of the "brew" on each end, and seal the bag.

Check it after 2-months in the Summer. You will be looking for a black slimy mess with all kinds of things grow-

ing out of it. Clean up the log section and split it in half (I use a wedge and a sledge). If it isn't what you want, put the halves back together and place it back in the bag.

Keep checking every few weeks because the time difference between spalt and rot can be very short for some wood.

You could add chunks of spalted wood instead of the brew, but it takes longer, and sometimes nothing grows because the spalt in the chunks is already dead. You could also just seal the wet wood in the plastic bag without adding anything, but the spalting will not be reliable. The brew is faster, and gives better spalting (my opinion).

You will have to experiment. Like everything else in woodturning, nothing is "tried and true", but it is worth the effort to try it. Some wood spalts. Some wood just rots. Others, like Cherry and Walnut, don't do much of anything. *.From WoodCentral by by Russ Fairfield, edited by Barry Humphus and thanks to Steve Thomas for the idea.*

Accessories to Improve Your Bandsaw

The bandsaw may be one of the easiest stationary tools to "amp up" with numerous accessories that improve performance or convenience. Some do both. Not every saw needs all these improvements, but yours will probably benefit from at least a few of these upgrades.

All the accessories in the world won't help much if your bandsaw stalls during demanding cuts or shakes like an over-caffeinated chihuahua. Smooth out the tremors and get as much cutting power as possible with these upgrades.

When the V-belt that connects the motor pulley and drive pulley sits in one position too long, it can take on a permanent curve, or "set," where it wraps around the pulleys, causing some nasty vibration. Replace it with a link belt (many soures -- check on the Internet) that stays flexible and absorbs vibration better than one-piece V-belts. Buy it by the foot, then adjust its length to fit your saw by adding or removing links.

Resawing wide stock requires all the power a bandsaw has to give, so make the most of your saw's efforts by stepping up to the widest 3-tooth-per-inch (tpi) blade your saw accepts. A wider blade flexes less for truer rip cuts and its larger surface area dissipates heat better so the blade stays sharp longer. The aggressive hook angle of the teeth on a resaw blade cuts quickly, generating a lot of sawdust. The large gullets clear that waste faster.

A blade with variable pitch, alternates sections of 2-tpi and 3-tpi. The 2-tpi sections cut quickly, even through the widest stock your saw handles. The 3 tpi sections re-

Bandsaw continued below . . .

duces vibration, giving a relatively smooth finish. If replacing the belt doesn't calm the jitters, check for out-of-balance wheels. To do this, remove the blade and drive belt so the wheels spin freely. Working on one wheel at a time, make a mark on the inside edge of the rim at its lowest point. Give the wheel a gentle spin, wait for it to stop, and make another mark at the bottom. Do this five times. Randomly-spaced marks mean the wheel is balanced. But a cluster of marks in one area points out a heavy spot and indicates the wheel needs to be balanced.

To do this, clean the wheel rim directly opposite the marks with alcohol and allow it to dry; then apply self-adhesive wheel weights to the cleaned area, starting with 1/4 ounce. Repeat the "spin test," this time making marks with a different-colored marker. Grouped marks again tell you to apply more weight, or change the amount or position of weights already in place. For small adjustments, divide the soft metal weights with an old chisel or knife.

Without guide blocks or bearings above and below the table, a bandsaw blade would wander like a four-year-old on her first ride without training wheels. Like that child, bandsaw blades, and sometimes the workpiece, need guidance. Keep them on track with these enhancements.

Guide blocks, with their large surface area, work especially well guiding wide blades, while roller bearings create less friction and heat buildup. Stacked roller-bearing guides from Carter Products, for example, combine the best of blocks and bearings. They also have toolless adjustment: Twist a thumbscrew to loosen a bearing; then fine-tune its position with the microadjuster. Cinch up the thumbscrew to lock the bearing in position.

A specialized guide bearing helps narrow blades (1/8" and 1/16") and track true during curved cuts. The rear of the blade rides in a groove in the bearing's edge. The groove provides side-to-side support and the bearing reduces friction.

If you don't have the budget for bearing guides, ceramic guide blocks provide an inexpensive upgrade from the factory-supplied metal blocks. You can also make your own out of oak, maple or walnut. The large, flat faces provide the same solid blade support, but the ceramic material generates less friction, so they run cooler. That translates into longer blade life. Installation is as simple as loosening a bolt or thumbscrew to remove the steel blocks, then putting the ceramic blocks in place. They wear so well that the manufacturer guarantees them forever.

For resawing and straight-line rips, a good fence is

essential, yet many saws come with no fence or a poor-performing one. The Kreg fence packs a lot of features in an affordable package. It pivots to account for blade drift (the tendency of a blade to pull to one side). For sawing thin, narrow stock, mount the fence with the wide face down on the table. It can then extend under the guide assembly, even with the assembly close to the tabletop. The fence easily lifts off the rail for quick switching from straight cuts to freehand work. An optional micro-adjuster makes precise fence movements easy.

Like any of us, a bandsaw occasionally needs relief from tension - the tension needed to keep its blade cutting true. Relieving that tension extends the life of the wheel bearings and tires, and makes blade changes possible. These accessories simplify taking your saw from tightly wound to relaxed and back again.

Bandsaw springs, like all of us, lose their ability to bounce back as they get older. If yours no longer has enough "oomph" to tension wide blades, replace it with a heavy-duty aftermarket spring. On most saws, installation goes quickly and doesn't require any special tools.

I found that after installing a stronger spring, it took fewer turns of the tensioning knob to properly tension a blade. With springs to fit most sizes of bandsaws, this inexpensive upgrade offers a lot of bang for your buck.

Small tensioning knobs prove difficult to grip, don't provide much leverage, and only allow half of a rotation before you need to change your grip. Turning them can literally be a pain. Mount a 6"-diameter cast wheel with a spinning handle, and adjusting blade tension becomes much more easy. The chrome finish prevents rust and looks nice, too.

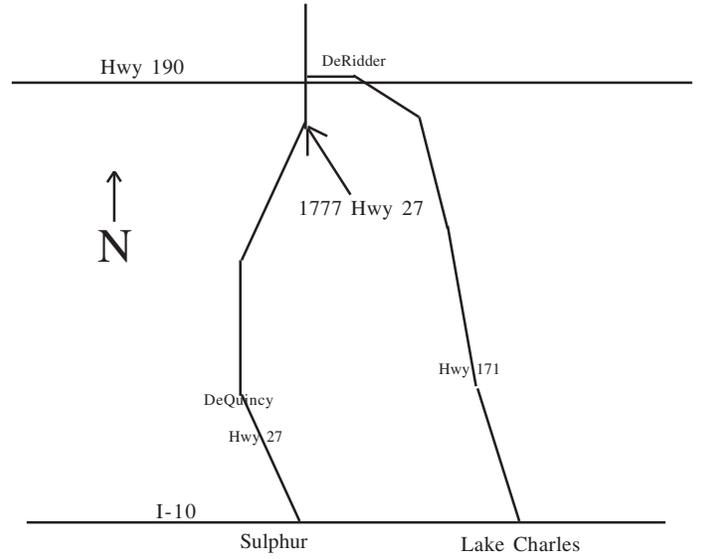
A quick-release lever applies or removes blade tension in a snap. In the up position, the mechanism keeps the blade under tension, ready for use. Pivot the lever down toward the table to release all tension for blade changes and between work sessions. The middle position relieves stress on the wheels and saw frame, but provides enough tension to hold the blade in place while mounting a blade and checking tracking. This upgrade took about 15 minutes to install, a small investment quickly regained with faster blade changes.

No bandsaw add-on will help much if you can't see your work. So defeat the forces of darkness with a task light. The magnetic base on this one sticks to any steel or iron surface, and the gooseneck puts the light exactly where you need it. Eleven LEDs shine a bright spotlight without the heat of incandescent bulbs. Juice comes from four AA batteries in the base, or use the optional AC power cord. *From Wood Magazine and edited by Barry Humphus.*

September Meeting Location

The out door / indoor kitchen kitchen of J. W. and Velma Anderson will be the setting for our meeting this month.

To get there, go north on on Highway 27 from Sulphur through DeQuincy and Singer to just past the city limit of DeRidder. J.W.'s place is the 3rd drive on your right past the DeRidder city limits at 1777 Highway 27, DeRidder, LA., 70634. If you need further directions, feel free to give J.W. or Wilma a call at 337-463-5217.



September 2013

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