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Gary Rock, Jeff Cormier, 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 Trouth: 583-2683. Each have years of experience and knowledge.

May Meeting Highlights

George and Nancy Kuffel were our hosts this month at their great shop. George and his contractor designed the shop and it is a marvel. I had the privilege of assisting George put in the ceiling. Most of you don't realize it, but there is an attic above the shop for further storage with a drop down stairs.

Dick Trouth got us started with a briefing on falls in the shop. There are many trip hazards in a shop, even one as large as George Kuffels. You must be very aware of what is on the floor, the debris - particularly saw dust and shavings. The wood shavings are slick so the best practice is to clean up after your work each day. I realize that this is troublesome but it is a necessary part of what you must do as a woodworker. Keep you shop clean - please do this as it makes falls and injury so much less worrisome.

We were grateful for so much Show and Tell this month as well as lots of excellent discussion. George Kuffel showed us a hand carved walnut rifle stock he made about 50+ years ago. The action is an Ackley Hornet .17 caliber. When pressed, George said he hand carved the mounting over several months. Chris Smith mentioned the Hawkins rifle kits he has used as a replacement stock. While these are mostly for back powder rifles, they make a number of standard stock kits as well.

Jeff Cormier presented a sweet little cherry table or lamp stand for the drawing this month. Jeff also provided some sample cherry slices that the winner could use for sample finishes. The table was a Woodsmith plan.

There was some discussion regarding cherry finishes and in fact finishes in general and Dick said that he uses Armoral to slow UV issues and to show the wood. Moreover, Chris Smith discussed the differences between northern and southern U.S. woods.

That dozer of Pie Sonnier was so very impressive. Can you truly realize the work that has gone in this lovely piece? With ebony, black walnut, cherry and more - it is a masterful work.

Another masterful work was Don Elfert's 1/10 scale model gazebo. Don also had the architectural drawings as well (that we'll reproduce on the web site). And he showed

photos of the 4 chairs he built for his covered patio. J.W. Anderson brought a neat plane, apparently built for making tongue and grove joints as well as a nice old brace.

Jim Couvillion discussed his new Grizzly shaper and brought one of the large bits it uses. Unfortunately, prior to learning the ins and outs of this power machine, he lost the ends of two fingers working with it. As we grow in experience as woodworkers, we sometimes get to the point where we are certain how something works without reading the directions. That was the case with Jim's accident. He said that he stood to the wrong side of the unit while operating it and also did not use the provided clamps for the work. There is an old saying in the computer world when a colleague is having trouble with a system or program: Read The F...ing Manual. So everyone read the manual that comes with the tool - it's boring, but necessary.

There was some discussion about Grizzly band saws with regard to blade vibration. Gary Rock had an oak bowl with an imbedded brass ring (given Rock's penchant for 'holy' bowls, this likely was the only thing holding it together!) and a lovely hackberry piece as well.

Ray Kebodeaux showed a piece from a burl he got from Steve Hedleski as well as a walnut and Osage pen. Mr. Thibodeaux had a paduc letter opener and a scrolled cross while Jack Stegal had a cross of mimosa. Chris Smith mentioned a seller of cypress at 700 Kingley Rd in Gilis and Pie mentioned a tip on cleaning band saw tires with alcohol or paint thinner. J.W. mentioned that carb cleaner also works well. Chris mentioned that he is opening a storefront at his shop at 324 Ryan St. where LCWW members may show and sell their works. J.W. won the bring back item while Theresa Wilfert won the DVD give-a-way. Mr. Thibodeaux won the Stines gift card (btw, if Eltee says he wants to go gamble, follow him and bet what ever he is betting - he wins just too often!).

Coming Up . . . Saturday, June 12, 9:00 A.M. at the Shop of Jeff Cormier. One heck of a well laid out shop and as always, Jeff has lots of great stuff to show and say.

Woodworking Innovations

These days so many of us have such a wide variety of power tools and it is just amazing to me. Just in my small shop I have a lathe, drill press, table saw, joiner, chop saw and much, much more. When I built my dining room table in 1979, I had a hand saw, a few chisels, a hand drill, small sander and could borrow a router. It is amazing what we as home woodworkers can do today with the availability and quality of modern power tools and products.

Prior to the mid-'80s, if you had a thickness planer it ran on 220 volts, used resharpenable steel knives, and weighed about a 1,000 lbs.. But Ryobi's AP-10 benchtop planer, launched in 1985, changed everything we do today.

Nebraska boat-builder Joe Sorensen needed a third hand to hold assemblies during glue-ups, so he came up with a one-handed bar clamp that today we know as the Quick-Grip clamp. He sold his invention to a manufacturer whose brands were eventually acquired by Irwin Industrial Tools. The clamps debuted in 1989 to the delight of countless woodworkers, and spawned legions of similar clamps.

Doing for tablesaws what airbags did for cars, SawStop could be the single greatest safety device in woodworking. Full-time patent attorney and part-time woodworker Steve Gass came up with the idea of making a safer saw in 1999 after his father caught his hand in a blade. Gass invented a blade brake, activated by skin contact, that stops a spinning blade in 1/200 of a second, leaving the victim with only a scratch at worst.

The HTC mobile tool bases were an inspiration that was simple: With the ability to move machines around, woodworkers could make better use of smaller shop space and dust-collection hook-ups. So Tim Hewitt welded together angle-iron steel frames to match the footprints of heavy machines, added casters, and voila!

The Nova four-jaw lathe chucks had been around for decades in metalworking but in 1988 Teknatool introduced a self-centering four-jaw chuck with circular jaws, and that style has since become the standard in woodturning. The Nova chuck enabled turners to hold - and then shape - a wood blank by tightening the jaws around a simple tenon, which was cut off after finishing the bowl. It also featured an innovative removable screw in the center of the chuck, used to mount the piece initially while you turned the tenon - no need for a faceplate.

In 1991 Franklin International debuted the first one-part, water-resistant wood glue that cleaned up with water and met the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) requirements for Type 2 water resistance. Ready-to-use Titebond II was a huge hit with woodworkers because it

was the first yellow wood glue suitable for outdoor projects. Then in 2004, Franklin International topped itself with the launch of Titebond III, the first one-part wood glue to achieve ANSI Type 1 water resistance, the highest level possible

It wasn't the first dovetail jig for routers, but the Leigh Industries D1258, created in 1984, was the first do-it-all, adjustable jig. While previous jigs (including one from Leigh) offered the ability to rout either through or half-blind dovetails, the D1258 enabled users to rout both types on the same unit. It also featured adjustable guide fingers for varying the width of pins and tails.

When Hitachi debuted the first sliding mitersaw in 1988, few people realized it also marked the unofficial retirement of radial-arm saws. The model C8FB sported an 8-1/2" blade and a direct-drive universal motor that slid forward and back on rails for crosscut capacity nearly double that of standard compound mitersaws of the time

While building kitchen cabinets for his Iowa home in 1986, tool-and-die maker Craig Sommerfeld fashioned a metal jig and stepped drill bit to bore angled holes into the back side of face frames. He then joined the frame members with pan-head screws driven into the hidden pockets. Craig's jig soon became the Kreg Jig. The easy, affordable, and effective joinery method enabled legions of woodworkers to build furniture, cabinets, and other projects for their homes without need for more complicated techniques and tools.

Prior to the mid-'80s, only professional shops had wide-panel drum sanders, which typically cost a few thousand dollars. But in 1984, Performax created an affordable drum sanding attachment for radial-arm saws. Then, in 1993, the fledgling company introduced its innovative 16-32 open-ended drum sander for about \$500, giving the average woodworker the ability to sand surfaces as wide as 32". The brand was eventually sold to Walter Meier Holding Company, the owner of the Powermatic and Jet brands.

Powered hollow-chisel mortisers had been around for decades, but if you wanted one you had to shell out big bucks for a floor-standing unit. Benchtop mortisers arrived on the scene in the mid-'80s under the Delta name but manufactured by Multico, an English company. Several years later Delta began manufacturing its own model, selling for about



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\$200 -- less than half the price of the English version.

Air-powered brad nailers, pinners, and narrow-crown staplers, popularized in large part by Norm Abram on The New Yankee Workshop, have found a home in most workshops thanks to their quick convenience. Originally, pneumatics were made for professional contractors and as assembly-line manufacturers. Then, in 1995, Porter-Cable designed and began manufacturing more affordable nailers. Since then, nailers and fasteners have become even more affordable.

Lamello introduced the portable biscuit joiner in the late '60s, but at a price (\$400 to \$600) beyond the reach of most home-shop woodworkers. Then, in 1987, Porter-Cable came out with its model 555 biscuit joiner that sold for less than half the price of the Lamello, dawning a new era in quick, affordable joinery.

As we became more informed of the health risks of breathing wood dust, manufacturers kept pace. They introduced affordable dust collectors, cyclones, and tool-triggered vacuums that not only sucked up the dust at the source, but also kept it contained with ultrafine filters. And tool manufacturers have placed greater emphasis on channeling dust into ports for those machines to better collect it.



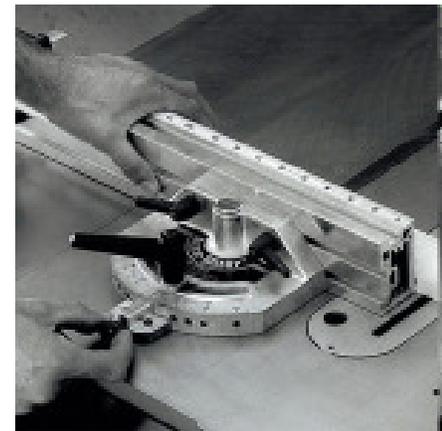
The earliest battery-powered drills in the 1970s were bulky and featured low-voltage batteries, but still seemed like a godsend because they had no power cord. Over the past 25 years manufacturers have boosted power significantly while cutting charge times and weight. They've also added keyless chucks and adjustable clutches, ergonomic designs, and other battery-powered tools, such as circular saws, reciprocating saws, jigsaws, and impact drivers.

Although manufacturers offered carbide-tipped saw blades and router bits beginning in the late '70s, it wasn't until the late '80s that carbide came into widespread use. With edges that stay sharp about 10 times longer than steel, it's rare now to find saw blades and router bits without carbide tips. Today, many jointers and planers feature cutterheads with replaceable carbide inserts.

Responding to tighter regulatory restrictions, finish manufacturers began making more environmentally friendly

products, such as water-based topcoats and stains, that also clean up easily. They also launched products -- water and oil-based -- that made finishing projects easier and more foolproof: gel stains, wipe-on polyurethanes, and oil-and-varnish blends.

For more than 50 years tablesaws came with ho-hum rip fences and run-of-the-mill miter gauges that proved unreliable. When the Biesemeyer T-square-style rip fence was introduced in the late '70s, its accuracy, ease of use, and popularity set the standard. Since the mid-'90s, the majority of tablesaw manufacturers have included this type of fence as standard equipment on all but the most basic machines. As for the miter gauges, most saws come with a bare-bones model with only three preset stops. That's why in 1988 JDS launched its Accu-Miter gauge that boasted accuracy to 1/30°, and featured a telescoping fence and flip stop. You can now find more than a dozen such aftermarket miter gauges, ranging from about \$50 to nearly \$300.



There's no question The New Yankee Workshop and its host, Norm Abram, inspired countless people to take up woodworking over the 21 year run of the program. In addition, woodworking magazines, books, and videos have exploded in number and availability. Sadly, Norm has chosen to end his long-running program and focus on

So-called "big box" retailers, found seemingly on every corner, make it possible to get nearly all your project supplies in one place, and at prices typically less than you'll find in specialty retailers.

Before about 1995, woodworkers had few resources for immediate help with their questions. Now, that assistance is as close as your computer, thanks to Internet forums and Web sites. You can even choose from thousands of project plans online. And the growth of Web retailers has driven down the price of tools and products, making it easier for beginners ("newbies" on the net) to get into woodworking, and for veterans to expand their arsenals. We have to count on web resources as much as possible these days and I think you should do this as well. If you don't have Internet access, you probably should. Go out to the Internet and learn more. Barry Humphus.