

Dick Trouth, President
Joe Comeaux, Treasurer

Officers and Directors

Barry Humphus, Editor, Bubba Cheramie
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.

March Meeting Highlights

Pie and Joy Sonnier hosted the meeting this month. With Joy's fine hand-made hot biscuits, it was great being there.

It was reported that Dick Hopes had a fall and was not feeling very well, so keep him and Jne in your thoughts.

Dick Trouth discussed safety in-so-far as using sanders, particularly stationary ones. He reminded us that you should never wear gloves as they could get caught in the machine and really pinch your pinkies. If you need protection when working with small items, and don't want to remove the skin from your knuckles or grind off your fingernails, wrap a bit of tape (just about any kind of shop tape will do) around your fingers for protection. Always wear safety glasses when using a sander, particularly if sanding and very hard material such as metals and plastics. You will find it a very long wait in the ER for the Doc to pluck the gunk out of your eye.

Dick reminded us that it is polite to be quiet while others are talking. You'll get your turn and if you need to discuss some private matter with someone, just step outside for that time.

The wonder-finish, shellack was discussed with Dick describing the process of doing a French Polish. I've certainly done one large surface with a French Polish and as a result, I built up my biceps and forarms while doing it. It's a great look, but a few coats of reduced poly will give about the same look. While shellack does not hold up with heavy use, it is easy to repair as newer shellack melts right into an older shellack finish.

Another great trick with shellack is to use it as a sealer as it dries very quickly and you can put practically any other finish right on top of it with no problem. Dick mentioned that the Kilz paint products contain shellack which is what gives this paint brand such good stain sealing properties.

Dick also passed around samples of the different qualities from brown to blonde. He suggested that you order it from www.shellack.net (707-226-3623) as they have every type you may want and can give you advise. It costs about \$1.50 per pound. He also suggested you should try their shellack sampler to get started.

You can also get it pre-mixed in a can but be careful as it has a relatively short shelf life. That is why it's best to just get the flakes and mix it (with alcohol) when you want to use it. Get the de-waxed so you don't have to filter it much.

Dick also showed off a couple of other interesting products including synthetic "steel" wool - it does not rust. And he brought a can of Bloxygin - a product sold to spray ito your finish if you need to put it away in a container for a while. The product is nitrogen gas and keeps the finish (or even that unfinished bottle of wine) from oxydizing (thugh Dick said he had never had an unfinished bottle of wine so could not assert that Bloxygen would work - it does).

There was also some discussion of a couple of automotive polishing products that can be applied in woodworking to obtain the very highest polish and shine, including the Scratch-Out brand available at automotive suppliers.

Mr. Thibodeaux showed one of his neat puzzles, J.W Anderson brought some pistol replicas on which he had mounted new grips. Jack Steagl had a really cool little recipe box of spalted maple and paduc.

Bob Theaux showed a very nice wine cabinet of black walnut and cherry while Don Elfert (a new member) brought a great patio chair he designed. Gary Rock's contribution included sycamore bowl with cocobola trim and a hackberry bowl with brass highlights and a cottenwood weed pot. Gary gets the brass filings from Craft Supply and uses Superglue to imbed the brass into the wood before the final refinement of the bowl.

Irvin Monroe brough a bird house from a kit made for children to assemble. He said that some 600 of these had been built by chilren in the area for various projects. Jeff Cormier showed of a HDTV antenna built for about \$1 based on a YouTube design he saw. Steve McQuorcadale had a very nice printer table of oak with laminated legs while Joe Comeaux showed a wooden braclet of misquite he turned. And of course Pie Sonnier showed the other D-5 Dozer. This one was the lovely natural finish version though Pie thinks the painted one looks much more real.

Coming Up . . Saturday, April 10 at the shop of Gary Rock. Come by and pet his lathe.

Annual LCWW Financial Report

As always, Treasurer Joe Comeaux has provided a great report for our organization, seen below. If you have any questions or comments, please let Joe know. While I'm not an accountant (only a lowley MBA), this looks pretty good as we have a bit more at the end of 2009 than we had at the end of 2008. It would appear that the contributions from raffles did the heavy lifting this past year. Raffles by members of contributed items by members really made the difference. Thank you every member for your contributions to this. Without your continued support, we might be in the hole. Please note that the LCWW operates on a cash basis rather than accrual and as a consequence, revenues and expensis are reported as received.

Balance as of 31 December 2008	\$864.05
Receipts:	
2009 & 2010 Memebrship Dues	\$ 900.00
Raffles	302.00
Corporate Sponsoerships	60.00
2008 (Makeup due to Ike) BBQ	506.00
2009 BBQ	510.00
Total Revenue:	\$2,278.00
Balance Plus Revenue:	\$3,142.05
Expenses:	
Postage	61.60
Printing	130.80
Door Prizes	95.00
Meeting Refreshments	37.89
Website Hosting Service	359.40
State of Louisiana Fees	5.00
Make up (Ike) BBQ (2008)	652.02
Annual BBQ (2009)	490.21
Total Exapenses:	\$1,831.92
Balance as of 31 December 2009	\$1,310.13

Once again, Joe Comeaux, as Treasurer, has done an outstanding job keeping up with our finances.

Lessons from a Small Shop: Finishing with Gels

Last month we talked some about dye stains and their qualities. This time we will discuss gel type stain products.

To understand how these two types of stains behave differently, imagine a piece of wood as if it were a slice of bread. Applying a gel stain to wood is like spreading peanut butter onto bread. The peanut butter sticks, but it doesn't penetrate the porous surface of the bread. You can spread

the peanut butter, but you can't apply it in a thin or translucent layer the way you can, say, warmed butter. Like fluid butter, thin-bodied stains go on thin and penetrate the surface.

Because gel stains lie on a wood surface instead of soaking into it, they uniformly color porous and nonporous areas alike. That makes them relatively goof-proof, and a great help to novice finishers. And, because they don't run or splatter, they're especially handy for applying to vertical surfaces.

Nevertheless, gel stains do have certain drawbacks. I avoid them on projects with lots of tight corners and crevices because the stain collects in these tight spots and is hard to remove. Thin-bodied stains don't have this problem because they wick into tight spots and the areas adjoining them. Because gel stains don't penetrate as well as thin-bodied stains, they don't bring out the "depth" of the wood grain as well as thin-bodied stains. That's why I prefer thin-bodied stains for porous woods such as oak, ash, mahogany, and walnut.

Species such as pine, maple, cherry, and birch have relatively nonporous surfaces that don't absorb stains well. These woods have areas where edge or end grain pops to the surface. So, when you apply thin-bodied stains to them, you can get splotchy areas of light and dark staining because of uneven absorption.



As shown in the photo above, gel stains help you achieve uniform coloration on these woods. Although you can buy "conditioners" specially made for sealing hard-to-stain woods prior to staining with thin-bodied stains, that combination did not give us as good a result as gel stains did.

Some-times you can't avoid combining woods of slightly different coloration or mismatching grain patterns in the same project surface. For example, various red oak boards may vary from pale white to pink in tone, and they may have flatsawn or quartersawn grain patterns. If economics dictate that you must use such boards together, you can help give the surface a uniform appearance by using gel stains.

Today, you can buy fiberglass and hardboard doors with a wood-grain embossed surface, and steel doors with nonembossed surfaces. Gel stains help you give both types of surfaces a grain-like appearance.

With embossed surfaces you simply apply a gel stain. Because it doesn't spread out, the stain stays on the

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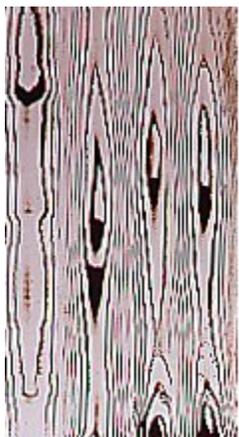
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flat surfaces and collects in heavier amounts in the embossed crevices of the grain.

This same non-spreading quality makes gel stains ideal for applying artificial wood grain to flat surfaces, such as steel doors, with a wood-graining tool. The photo on the left on the previous page shows what happened when I used this tool with thin-bodied and gel stains.

Zar wood stain, although not a true gel stain, is thicker than thin-bodied stains and also works for wood graining. Zar products are made by UGL

Because gel stains collect in crevices, they also help



you give country projects such as the wood on the left a faux patina. You simply wipe on the stain, then wipe it off, leaving the stain in crevices and other spots where dirt would accumulate over the years.

I've found that Minwax products are just slightly thicker than Bartley products and the Wood-Kote stains are considerably thicker than the other two. So, the Wood-Kote product possesses all of the qualities-and drawbacks-of a gel stain to a greater degree than the others.

For example, the Wood-Kote does the best job of masking uneven wood coloration and graining, but it's also the hardest to apply and wipe off. Removing it from crevices is a chore.

If you like the goof-proof nature of gel stains, you use the Bartley and Minwax products for all of your staining work, while Wood-Kote seems best suited to the tasks described on the previous page with non-porous woods.

So go ahead and give gel stains a try. Just remember to always test your stain on a sample piece before applying it to your project. *Barry Humphus*, based on info from Bob Flexner's book *Understanding Wood Finishing*.

The Woodworking Shows

The touring Woodworking Shows will happen in near-by Katy, Texas on April 16-18. The tickets are \$10 online or \$15 at the door. As this is not at Reliant Stadium, the hotdogs will likely be cheaper. The show will be at the Leonard E. Merrell Center: 6301 South Stadium Lane, Katy, Texas 77494 (281) 396-2562.

How To Make A Box Joint

Manually - cutting the box joint: If done by hand you mark you joints on both ends of the wood, cut them out with later removing the sockets with a chisel.

Using a Router: The router is certainly one of the most common ways to cut box joints or any other corner connection such as dovetails or mortise and tenons. While you can make your own box joint jig for your router, I personally favor using a dovetail jig with a finger joint template. Makes the workflow easy and especially when cutting smaller amount of joints, very effective.

Spindle Moulder: Certainly one of the fastest ways to cut box joints, since all pins and sockets of the box joint are cut at once. Buy using multiple cutters at the same time, the complete joint gets cut



at once. Additionally using a spindle moulder allows you to clamp various workpieces together and cut them in one go. Saves time and permits full precision and fit of the final joint.

Band Saw: A rather rough method of cutting box joints is using the bandsaw. Certainly used for box joints where less precision is required, since the band saw blade usually tends to "bend" a bit more vs. e.g. a table saw blade.

Table Saw: One of the most common ways of cutting box or finger joints is the table saw. The workpiece is cut vertically over the table. Basically guide by the mitre gauge or if you have - the sliding table of your table saw. While the cut on a table saw is straight vertical and very precise, the "tricky" part is to get the spacing right. Here is where box joint jigs or templates come into play.

Joint-MATIC: If you've got one of these, it is very precise once you have set up the machine. Just run the work piece through, turn the crank the correct number of times and you've got your joint made. Like a Spindle Moulder, you can run multiple pieces through at one time.

It may take you some time to master the skill of using a box joint jig without making mistakes, but with some practice you'll soon be making woodworking box joints like the experts. A box joint jig will make your finger joints in your woodworking projects look professional and will give you a great deal of pleasure as you master more and more complex projects.