

Jeff Cormier, President
Dick Hopes, Treasurer

Officers and Directors

Barry Humphus, Editor, Bubba Cherie
George Kuffel, John Marcon, 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 Truth: 583-2683. Each has years of experience and knowledge.

April Meeting Highlights

J.W. Anderson's shop produces many fine furniture projects, especially porch swings, great Androndyke chairs and great old recovered tools. J.W. hosted the April meeting at his shop. One of the delights of a meeting at J.W.'s shop is of course the blueberry muffins. Mrs. Anderson told me that she has trained J.W. how to make them. We shall see at the next meeting there.

Jeff Cormier started off by discussing jointer safety. For those who do not have a jointer, let me say that it is a wonderful machine, no matter what jointer you have. A jointer makes superbe surfaces and when set up correctly, makes accurate, square and flat boards that you can use in your project. But Jeff mentioned something that all jointer owners must be aware of and that is running short boards through them. Regardless of the size of your jointer (six or eight inch), you must never run a short piece of stock through one. The safety information that came with your jointer will tell you the minimum length of stock that the machine will handle. Never push stock smaller than this through the cutting head. For smaller stock, use a sharp hand plane.

Jeff mentioned that making a mark on your jointer regarding the input and output feed is the best thing you can do. That is, measure from the outfeed to the end feed and add 12 inches. This is about the shortest board that you can safely run through a jointer. Another point Jeff made was to always use a push frame device to move the piece through the blades. Several members, including me, mentioned pushing through a short board and the disastrous results. In fact there is a dent in the wall behind mine that is evidence of the force of a throw-back from a short board through a jointer.

As always, we had had great Show and Tell starting with several Gary Rock items including a cottonwood vase with a fineal of blackwood, an aspen bowl with brass inlay, laced sasil bowl and a pecan burl bowl with a danish oil finish.

Bob Theau came as a guest and left as a member. He brought a stage coach replica he built from photo research. He said the only item he could not find a good photo of were the coach handles. Someone mentioned that George Gamble builds full sized replicas in the Houston River Road

shop and that Bob should contact him for advise. In any case, Bob's stage coach was exquisitely detailed and finely finished.

Mr. Eltee Thibodeaux showed some of his wonderful scroll work including a clock, playing card holder, block puzzle and wall switch plates. Dick Truth, one of our fountains of woodworking knowledge pointed out that wooden switch plates need to have a metal backing per electrical code.

Our host, J.W. Anderson showed a cypress scoop, spalted beech bowl, beech coin bank, several wooden kitchen utensils and a swinging bench, also of beech. Jimmy Everett has got his eyes back and has began carving again. One of his canes had a carved wren as it's handle and another was a cooperhead snake. One thing we learned about Jimmy is his incredible drawing talents. He also brought several binders, each of which contained hundreds of his pencil drawings of people, animals and places - a wonderful portfolio of work.

Pie Sonnier brought us a 1928 Chevy truck as a Bring Back item. It was won by Dick Truth. Bill Fey showed of an antique spoke shave with a dogwood handle.

Jeff Cormier discussed measuring strategies, especially those dealing with inaccurate measuring tools. The fact is that measuring devices are all mass produced and the accuracy of any one of them can be called into question. The best advise is that if you start using, for example, a particular tape measure for a project, use the same tape measure to the project's completion. Another strategy is to try and find an accurate rule. Generally, steel rules tend to be more accurate than common tape measures. But even with these, you need to look for one that has milled markings rather than painted on markings. The milled sometimes have paint in the milling mark, making them easier to read. Jeff said that your standard tape measure can be as much as 1/32 inch off, meaning that over a 3 foot span, your length would be almost 1/8th in error. Jeff said that folding measures can be accurate, especially old wood and brass ones.

Coming Up . . . Saturday, May 10, 9:00 A.M. at the shop of Dick Hopes.

Trees: The Oldest Living Organism

We take trees for granted. Trees are the source for so many commercial products today, that it is inconceivable that modern human society could survive without them. In fact, much of the Earth's oxygen comes from trees.

Sadley, I will have to cut down an old oak tree this Summer before the storm season. It was hit by lightening a few years ago and despite my hiring a licensed arborist to care for it, it must go because of the danger that it could fall on my home should it come down unexpectedly. Comparable trees that were felled after a recent storm in our neighborhood were between 90 and 120 years old. One was 147 years old (I personally counted the growth rings).

Recently, scientists in Sweden have found a cluster of spruces in the mountains in western Sweden which, at an age of 8,000 years, may be the world's oldest living things.

The Norway spruces were found perched high on a mountain side where they have remained safe from recent dangers such as logging, but exposed to the harsh weather conditions of the mountain range that separates Norway and Sweden.

Carbon dating of the trees carried out at a laboratory in Miami, Florida, showed the oldest of them first set root about 8,000 years ago, making it the world's oldest known living tree.

California's "Methuselah" tree, a Great Basin bristlecone pine, is often cited as the world's oldest living tree with a recorded age of between 4,500 and 5,000 years. Two other spruces, also found in the course of climate change studies in the Swedish county of Dalarna, were shown to be 4,800 and 5,500 years old.

"These were the first woods that grew after the Ice Age," said Lars Hedlund, responsible for environmental surveys in the county of Dalarna and collaborator in climate studies there. "That means that when you speak of climate change today, you can in these (trees) see pretty much every single climate change that has occurred."

One of Nature's many gifts to us are trees. They provide shelter, beauty, the air we breath, the shade for our homes, the pleasure of the building from their harvest and the projects we make as woodworkers. In short, trees make what we do possible. Admire them, preserve them when possible, but care and use them carefully and wisely. *Barry Humphus.*

LCWW Board Meeting

The LCWW Board met on April 24 at the home of Jeff Cormier. The purpose of the meeting was to set tentative meeting places for the rest of the year and conduct other

club business. Attending were Jeff Cormier, Bubba Chermie, Barry Humphus, George Kuffel, John Marcon and Gary Rock. The attendees were treated to some great BBQ.

The tentative meeting places for the rest of the year are: July - Kuffel, August - Cormier, September - Humphus, October - Annual BBQ, November - Chermie, December - Middleton. Remember that these have not been set or confirmed. We'll update as needed.

There was a request by Gary Rock to add spouse names to our membership list. I guess we all know how awkward it can be to call someone and not know who might answer the phone. Therefore, the Board asks the members to give Barry Humphus the name of their spouse if they want.

One of the struggles is to find an appropriate door prize or raffle prize every month. There are only so many tape measures or clamp sets you can give away before everyone has too many.

The Board decided that we are switching to Stine's Gift Cards as the door prize and probably the raffle prize as well. The values will be either \$15 or \$25 Stine's Gift card. But we are making this more interesting. If you win either a door prize or a raffle prize AND have brought a Show and Tell item, you get the \$25 Stine's Gift Card, otherwise you get the \$15 Gift Card.

There are a couple of simple restrictions. The Show and Tell item has to be something you made (not something you purchased or found, such as a tool, sack of screws, box of nails, etc.). What you bring as a Show and Tell item is up to you and could even be a tool you made (such as a jig you made would qualify). Photographs of the item are accepted - some items are too large to bring to a meeting. Any disputes will be decided by the Board members present at the meeting. If you win and don't have a Show and Tell item, you still get a \$15 Gift Card.

The idea is to encourage the members to do woodworking. So make some sawdust and win big.

The Board decided to continue with the Bring Back Item and retain the current rules. If you win, you can choose to Bring Back something you made or return the item for a redrawing. You still have two months to decide.

The final discussion involved wanting to find out what the members want in terms of presentations, education and information. So we will do a survey of your needs. We will ask that you fill out a survey form and get it to Barry or simply email Barry with the same information. The information we need includes what sort of woodworking you do, what sort do you want to do, what part of woodworking gives you the most satisfaction, the most trouble and so on. *Barry Humphus*

Using a Jointer

Straightening wood on a properly adjusted jointer is easy once you understand the process. It is also important to realize that you are stronger than the wood and can “force” the jointer to make bad cuts. The key is letting the jointer do the work and moving the wood across it so that the least amount of wood is removed to correct the defect.

Though it may seem expedient to joint a long board before breaking it down into project-sized pieces, the opposite is usually true. Many consider the maximum length that can be processed on a jointer to be roughly twice the length (overall) of the tables. **Manufacturers warn of jointing short pieces with minimum lengths often in the 9” to 12” range. Read the safety instructions carefully.** While very long boards can be successfully jointed with proper support outside the tables, it is almost certain that more wood will have to be removed to eliminate a defect.

Breaking a long board down to near project sized pieces not only makes them easier to handle, it can reduce defects such as arching or bowing between the ends by as much as 50%. Far less material must be removed from the shorter pieces to eliminate a defect, leaving a thicker board when jointing is complete.

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rule. To prevent chipping, tearout and get the best surface possible from the jointer, its knives have to cut down or with the grain on the final finishing passes.

On some pieces, particularly when jointing the wide face, reading grain can be very difficult. Occasionally, taking very light cuts (1/32” max) in both directions and inspecting the surface between will reveal which produces the smoothest cut.

Applying too much downward pressure to the wood can easily flatten a bow or twist as it passes over the knives. With the wood pressed flat, or close to it, the jointer dutifully cuts it flat in that position but when released, it springs back up and the defect reappears. One of the harder things to learn when operating a jointer is developing a feel for how much pressure is necessary to maintain control of a piece of wood as it moves across the knives. Any more pressure than that begins to flatten the wood on the jointer, reducing the defect that the jointer sees.

Waxing the tables and keeping the knives sharp reduces the effort necessary to control the wood and makes this an easier lesson to learn. You still have to develop the feel for what it takes to control the wood but it is easier when the wood and jointer are not fighting back in the form of excess friction. The best teacher in this case is practice.

Because some portion of the board on the outfeed table is already flat, that is where our hands should focus what pressure is being applied. We are forced to have our hands over the infeed table to get the piece started and to guide the piece until a large enough section at the leading edge is machined flat. However, as soon as there is enough wood flat on the outfeed table, your hands and the pressure they apply should focus there to keep the machined edge of the wood flat on the outfeed surface which forces the rest of the board to follow on the line.

If the wood has a serious defect such as an arch or bow you may have to apply enough pressure before and after the cutter head to keep the board as level to the table as possible during the initial cuts. Then, as soon as the jointer begins making a flat surface on the leading edge, pressure can be concentrated over that spot on the outfeed table. That way the knives can extend that machined-flat portion and minimize the amount of wood that is removed during however many cuts needed to eliminate the rest of the defect.

Another technique that can help true a mildly distorted board is swapping ends between the first few cuts. While we want the finish cuts to be made with the knives working “down” the grain, reversing the piece during the initial cuts will help average wood loss at either end, help bring the board down flat to the tables evenly and actually minimize the amount of wood removed.

If the defect is big, especially on an edge, it may be better to reduce its severity with a preliminary cut with a hand-operated saw or even a hand plane. *From New Woodworker, edited by Barry Humphus.*