Lake Charles Woodworkers Club, Inc. September 2005

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## AUGUST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Bubba Cheramie was our host this month at his home where we saw a couple of great videos on woodworking. The first was "Hand-Applied Finishes: Coloring Wood with Jeff Jewitt" from the Fine Woodworking folks. Jewitt starts by saying that the art of coloring wood dosesn't take a degree in chemistry. What you need is a good understanding of the coloring compounds available and how to apply them.

In the tape, Jewitt demonstrates pigment colorants, how they are applied and how they look on several species of wood including mahogany, red oak, pine, cherry and poplar. Jewitt showed the best way to test various colorants by glueing up several strips of different woods and applying the colorants in stripes accross each species of wood. This provided a dramatic test of what different colorants do to a selected group of different woods.

Jewitt applied pigments colors, dye colors as well as chemical colorants to each speices of wood while describing the proper way to apply each, including safety issues, especially for the chemical applications. He also showed how, for example, you can combine different colorant techniques using one sample of applied dyes.

This videotape is available at the Calcasieu Parish Library and we encourage you to check it out and watch it again as it is almost impossible to get every detail in one setting. If the branch library does not have this tape on hand, you can ask the Reference Desk Librarian at your area library to order it from another branch where it is located. You can check where the copy is by either going to the branch and looking at their online catelog (at the library or through the Internet at www.calcasieu.lib.la.us or ask a librarian to assist you. The library service is free and well worth what we pay in taxes to support their mission.

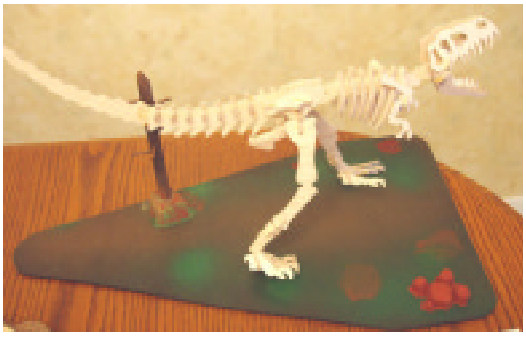
Our other tape was rather specialized as it covered how to properly measure and build an antique (a Victorian chair in this case). The techniques were somewhat complex and I only wished that I had the time to do this properly. Once again, you probably need to watch this tape again for the details on correct measurement and the build.

Besides the tapes, we had lots of Show and Tell this month. Despite the heat, the LCWW's have been busy with projects.

James Anderson brought us a really nice pecan box with neat worm holes as well as a teriffic outdoor swing (but I didn't catch the wood). Gary Rock showed off a set of three small vases, two of which where made of magnolia. Pie Sonnier obviosly likes to mow his grass but I think he needs a bigger model than the John Deer yard tracktor made of various woods. I think is had about a four inch cutting area!

Dicks Hopes' theme this month in some great scollwork was waterfowl: Ducks, Geese and Egrets. Rod Nunannly brought a gift to Theresa Wilfret — her name scrolled out of oak. Mr. Thibodeaux also showed us some of his great scrollwork with a portrait of John Wayne and a motorcycle (maybe he should sell it to Gary Rock). Also, Mr. Thibodeaux did another one of his scrolled and engraved hammers which he gave to Barry Humphus. This is actually a paperweight but Barry thought it was too nice to be used for such a mundane task and it occupies a space on his fireplace mantel.

Finally, Lee Frazier showed us a difficult scrollwork piece — a T-Rex model he did from a plan. Like always, you can see these and more than 300 others work from the LCWW at www.lcwoodworkers.com in the Gallery area.



Coming Up ... Saturday, 10 September, 9:00 a.m. at The Studio of Frank Thompson. Frank will show us around, see some great doors and a bit about glass work in his shop in Topsey.

## HURRICANE KATRINA RELEIF

We were going through our stoarage rooms to see what could be found that would benefit the Hurricane Katrina refugees in Lake Charles shortly after they began arriving at the LC Civic Center. We ran across a couple bags of LCWW made toys that had been missed for delivery to the Lake Charles Womens Shelter a couple of years ago. The toys were taken to the Civic Center and donated for the children of the storm refugees.

## SANDING WOOD SURFACES

The first step to a good finish is to make sure the surface the finish will be applied to is free of all defects such as dents, gouges, scratches and milling marks. Most finishes bring out the natural grain and beauty of the wood. Unfortunately, they may also magnify any defects that may have gone unnoticed. What appears to be a minor defect on raw wood will stand out like a sore thumb when a stain or finish is applied.

Surface preparation should begin before the project is assembled. A fair amount of common sense should be used during construction. For example: any surface that can't be easily reached after assembly should be sanded before assembly. In general attention to detail such as tight joint lines and excess glue squeeze out should be addressed during construction. Excess stain will accumulate between poorly fitted joints and will appear as unsightly dark lines when the finish has been applied. The glue squeeze out should be left to dry and then removed by using a scraper. During construction constantly ask yourself, "How will this affect the surface when I apply a stain or finish"?

If you wish to build a quality piece of furniture, buy good quality lumber, free of knots, sap, blemishes etc. If you do so, about the only defect you will have to deal with on the board will be mill marks. When boards are run through a planer, the rotating planer knives take shallow bites out of the wood. Mill marks appear as a series of repeating raised bumps that run across the grain of the board. If the knives are very dull, the marks really stand out, but more often they are less pronounced, in some cases invisible to the naked eye. It's important to note that mill marks are present on every board that has been run through a planer, regardless of quality or source. Sometimes mill marks are very hard to see. If you don't detect and remove them, they will really stand out once a stain or finish has been applied. The best way to sight mill marks or any other minor flaws or defects is to use reflected light. Position a lamp above the work surface at about a 30 degree angle to the surface. You will be surprised when the marks you could not see before now look like mountain peaks and valleys. Overall, the best way to remove mill marks and other minor defects like small surface scratches is by sanding.

There are several types of sandpaper, some are designed for sanding finishes like lacquer and varnish while others are best for sanding raw wood. Garnet Paper is an orange colored sandpaper that is made of a natural abrasive. It is excellent for sanding raw wood. Another type of paper that is favored by furniture and cabinet makers for sanding raw wood is Aluminum Oxide paper (sometimes known as production paper). This is the standard brownish colored paper found in most hardware and paint stores. Aluminum Oxide is a man made abrasive and will last a little longer than Garnet paper. Either of the two will produce excellent results. The types of paper you want to stay away from for sanding raw wood are the Silicon Carbide (Wet or Dry) paper which is black in color, and the light gray colored papers which are lubricated and used to sand lacquers and other topcoats.

Sandpaper is graded by using a number system. The finer the paper, the higher the number. Garnet and Alum. Oxide paper range in grit sizes from 36 (Very Corse) to 240 (Fine). Even finer sandpaper can be purchased for sanders such as 3M's Microfine series from 100 microns down to 15 microns (in this case, the lower the number the finer the grit).

Over the past few years a variety of sanders have been introduced onto the woodworking market. Some work very well, while others, not so well. The three most common sanders used for surface prep are a belt sander, orbital sander (pad sander) and random orbital sander. Each sander produces a distinct surface finish. A belt sanderis best used when a lot of material has to be removed from the surface. For example when glued up boards have to be leveled. It is a dangerous tool, make one mistake and you may wind up ruining the workpiece. Even though a belt sander removes stock quickly, I don't think it's worth the risk. The belt sander leaves straight lined scratch pattern. While orbital sanders do not remove stock like belt sanders, some of the heavier models like the Porter Cable Model 330 Speed Bloc will do a great job of removing scratches and milling marks when a piece of 80 grit sandpaper is mounted to it. These sanders leave small orbital scratch patterns that are nearly invisible to the naked eye. When using an orbital sander, don't press down too hard on the worksurface. Let the weight of the machine do the job. Although you can initially sand across grain make sure you take your last passes with the grain to avoid leaving scratch marks on the stock. The random orbital sander creates an orbital as well as revolving motion, and removes stock much quicker than a pad sander

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## BUG PATROL

The LCWW members are lucky to have so many smart people among our group. They always inspire me to investigate chemical solutions to woodworking problems, especially in the area of wood finishes. But a mention of the West Nile Virus in the local media got me to looking into chemistry as a way to combat this problem and I found a collection of household products that will cause the mosquitoes in your yard to go to your neighbors yard. The household chemistry is: epson salts, stale beer and Listerine Brand mouthwash in equal quantitities. Yes, this works and will actually cause your grass to grow greener (not looking forward to mowing more) while driving off the mosquitoes.

Here's how it works. Epson salt is basically magnesium sulfate and good for plants but also has the property of repelling insects. Standard Listerine contains many things including thymol (a good pet repellent — keeps the neighborhood unleashed dog off your lawn), ethanol, methyl salicylate (a pesticide), benzoic acid (an insect repellent), sodium benzoate (a disinfectant), and eucalyptol (an insect repellant). It contains several other ingreediants that have no effect on bugs. The stale beer also contains a small amount of ethanol and a very small amount of trichorolmelamine (a disifectant and used as an insect repellant). I don't recommend using a premium beer as you need to drink this (i.e. Rickenjacks Dark). Use a cheap beer. In fact as I checked this out and learned more about what Listerine is made of, I realized why they state that you should not ingest it, is on the label.

Application is also simple. Mix equal quantities of epson salts, Listerine (though there are several generic versions that would work) and stale beer in a hose sprayer or pump-up sprayer (the hose sprayer works the best). I suggest mixing this in a separate container before putting the solution in your sprayer. Spray your yard, shrubs and trees, both back yard and front. The critters will go away and this should last a month or so. To see more, go to www.msnbc.msn.com/id/8258983/ Barry Humphus.

SANDING Continues . . .

and at the same time leaves a scratch pattern that is almost swirl free, even when sanding across grain. To properly use this sander, start it while it is on the wood. If you wait until it is running at full speed before you set it on the work, it may gouge out the surface.

Many woodworkers believe that if you sand the work to a super fine grit, you will achieve a better finish. This is not true. The only purpose for sanding is to remove mill marks, tool marks, other defects and to smooth the surface. When sanding, sandpaper leaves small grooves relative to the grit size of the paper you are using. By sanding with progressively finer grits you are making these grooves smaller.

## DRILL PRESS TRICKS

Occasionally I need to glue-up two small pieces of wood. But it's almost impossible to clamp the pieces together without the twisting action of the clamp causing them to shift out of alignment.

One solution is to use your drill press and a hex head bolt as a clamp. This allows you to exert pressure in a vertical line — with no rotation whatsoever.

To do this, first align the pieces and make a pencil mark across the joint line. Then, place the pieces on the drill press table and position the bolt about 1" above the workpieces. Insert the hex head bolt in the chuck and tighten.

Next, apply glue and match up the pencil marks. Now turn the handle on the drill press to lower the head of the bolt so it presses tight against the workpieces. Then tighten the depth adjustment to hold the bolt in place. This clamps the joint tight without twisting.

A lot of projects require drilling holes positioned in the same place on a number of pieces. But setting up a fence and stop block to position a workpiece can take a bit of time.

A quick way to do this is to clamp a framing square or machinists square to the drill press table. The inside corner of the square substitutes for the typical fence and stop block arrangement, and it's a perfect 90 degrees.

To use the square, first place the drill bit over the spot where the hole is to be drilled. Then position the framing square around the corner of the workpiece, and clamp the square to the table.

To locate the holes on the remaining pieces, just slide each piece into the corner of the square.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

Remember that the Annual BBQ is next month where we'll have Show and Tell, a book and magazine swap, teriffic food and a great time. You can get tickets at the September meeting or contact Bubba Cheramie, Dick Hopes or Barry Humphus. The cost is only $10.00 per person (an incredable bargin these days for all you could possibly eat), plus you'll have a great time.

While we've donated all of the toys received so far this year to the Hurricane Katrina Relief, it would not hurt to give a few more. If you have toys made, just bring them in September or to the BBQ and Barry will be sure they get to children in need.