Lake Charles Woodworkers Club, Inc. October 2008

Jeff Cormier, President
Dick Hopes, Treasurer
Officers and Director
Barry Humphus, Editor, Bubba Cheramie
George Kuffel, John Marcon, Chuck Middleton

Mentoring Program - If you have a project, a problem in any woodworking area, these members have volenteered 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 has years of experience and knowledge.

September Meeting Highlights

The home of Barry Humphus was our meeting place this month and we all sat under a nice pation cover for the Show and Tell plus the presentations and discussion.

Our long time treasurer, Dick Hopes could not be with us this month as he just went through bypass surgery and will berecovering over the next six weeks or so.

Mr. Thibodeaux started the Show and Tell off by offering three little clocks he made while practicing his dove tail joint making. He described getting a nick on a finger by using a router bit that had gone dull and pushing too hard.

Pie Sonnier showed us a Model A hot rod model complete with slicks. It was made of various woods including cherry, walnut and purple hart. Jack Stegal made and brought several gift crosses and described how a good woodworker hides his mistakes.

Bob Theaux brought a coin bank made to look like a giraffe that was later won by Lou Ann Haught in our drawing. Bob got the design from the 158 issue of Wood Magazine. Steve McCorquodale showed some photos of a cedar coffee table he built recently constructed.

Jim Couvillion showed us some sand paper he likes from Klingspor (www.klingspor.com). Jim reports that it is made in Germany and has great characteristics interms of its life and quality. The sanding materials that Klingspor manufactures are pure industrial grade products and are of very high performance. He also showed off a nice old air sander - that is, one powered by air pressure from a compressor. These are often much easier to use than conventional electric powered ones.

Jeff Cormier discussed safety with circular saws.Jeff's first advise is to inspect your saw before each use. We tend to just grab them and use them so it is important to take a look at the condision of the clamps to be certain they are both in the correct position and tight. Take a look at the cord to make certain that there are no nicks and that it is free to move as you push the tool through the work. Check the blade - is it sharp and not warped, rusted or lose?

Jeff also brought one of his circular saw jigs that also serves as a router jig. Simply made, it has one side for the distance between the base of a circuar saw to provide a striaght edge and the other side provides the same service for a router.

When setting a circuar saw, make certain that the blade will protrude at least 1/4 inch below the surface of the wood you are cutting. Always wear safty glasses and position yourself such that chips do not fly toward you as you make a cut.

To insure that you get a chip-out free cut, score a line along the cutting line as this will substantially reduce chip out with this type of saw. And before you turn it on, be certain that the cord is free and will not get in the way of the blade as you make your cut. Another tips is to be sure the blade is not in contact with the work peice prior to applying power as this could cause kick back.

Jeff brought a couple of saws and gave away an older Craftsman unit to Steve McCorquodale. But the one he currently uses is also a Sears model.

The Craftsman has some very nice features including a work light that comes on when you plug the unit in. While the set of LEDs don't really make much of a true work light, they certainly tell you if the unit has power. That is both good for safety as well as frustration. You always know that the unit has power when you see the light. Another great feature is the laser guide built into the saw. This gives you the ability to look ahead as you make a cut and provides a true guide of where the blade is going when making your cut. The Craftsman 7-1/4 in. Circular Saw with Laser Trac and LED Worklight retails for about $90 though can be purchased as a refurbished unit at the outlet store on Ryan for about $70.

Dick Troth showed the collection of tools he and Bill Fey will use at their dovetail workshop on November 4 at his shop. You show bring sharp tools if you want to participate but you can just watch or borrow theirs as needed.

10th Annual BBQ - Postponed

LCWW would normally hold our Annual BBQ this month, but our meeting place was flooded by Ike. The meeting will be held at the shop of Jeff Cormier. 11 October at 9:00 a.m. Please see the map on how to get there.

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Extended Run System for Portable Generators – Part 1

Last month's meeting brought lots of questions and comments about portable generators. Many of us have them and most of us use them every couple of years or less. And that is generally the problem – lack of use. Gasoline gets stale and as it gets older, it can leave a sticky, gummy residue inside the carburetor of your portable generator (or chain saw, lawn mower, etc.) engine. So the key is to start your engine periodically – such as at least every couple of months. You should also use a gasoline additive called Stabil which will keep gasoline fresh for up to a year.

Because my 10 year old Coleman Powermate came with a 1 gallon tank, I had to put fuel in it about every 1-1/2 hours. I don't like getting up every hour and a half to fill up the tank. So my solution to this was to get a bigger tank.

What I wanted to do was to modify fuel delivery without a radical change to the generator. So if you have a generator that only has enough fuel capacity for a single gallon of gas, it probably only runs for 2 hours tops. That just does not cut it for most emergency situations or when you need to leave the generator running for long periods of time. Here is how you can make an auxiliary fuel tank to feed your generator. Note that if your generator already has a 5-6 gallon or larger tank, you don't really need to do this as it will run for several hours with a full load of gasoline.

You can get all of the materials you need at a Wal-Mart, boating supply company or a sporting goods store. All of the parts I bought are from a company called Attwood.

Purchase a marine gas tank (mine is a 6 gallon), 2 plastic marine fittings, 2 brass fittings, and a marine hose with a squeeze pump-ball and two stainless steel hose clamps suitable for the hose pump line. You may optionally order an extra cap for your generator from the dealer or manufacturer (Harlow is a good place to check), but I just used my original gas cap. The total cost was approximately $45.

Note that the brass and plastic fittings are designed to seal when in use or not – that is what makes them safe to use for this application as well as in boats.

Take one of the brass fittings and connect it to the marine gas tank you purchased. The importance of purchasing a marine gas tank is that it has a special vent system and a special line hook up attachment (be certain to open the vent before you crank up the system after building this). Take the black plastic marine gas connector and fit it over the brass fitting on your tank. Note that the instructions for the Attwood gas tank say that you should use teflon tape to get a good seal.

Take the gas cap off of your generator and place it on a solid table or floor with a scrap piece of wood under it.

The best thing to use is of course a drill press at the lowest speed. Chuck a 1/2 inch bit in the drill and drill a 1/2 inch hole in the center of the cap. You do not want to make the hole any bigger than 1/2 inch. Drill straight and slowly if using a hand drill. If the hole turns out a little too big, you can still use it, but you will need to use silicone sealant in the gap to ensure a good seal.

Screw the second brass marine fittings into your generator cap through the hole you just drilled. If you drilled the hole correctly, there will be enough plastic left to grab onto the threads of the brass fitting and it will tap itself into the hole. If not, then you have to use silicon caulk to seal up the hole to hold the fitting.

Get your marine hose ball-pump. This is going to be the line you to which you connect the tank and the generator. Before connecting it up, look for the direction arrow on the pump, and install the pump with the arrow going toward the generator – this is the gas flow. Install one end of the marine hose with the squeeze pump to the fitting on the gas tank. Use a small hose clamp to secure it onto the fitting in case you have to move the tank around. Make sure the hose is connected tightly to the tank. Of course, you need to follow the directions that came with the tank.

Install the other end of the marine hose to the new fitting at the top of the generator gas cap. Use a second hose clamp here to secure the hose. Generators vibrate like mad and you do not want the hose to come off.

Put gasoline in your marine tank and move it a few feet away from your generator. Do not sit the portable tank on top of your generator as it is made of plastic and could melt in the high heat. Give the squeeze ball two to three good pumps to prime the line. This works best if you already have a full tank of gas in the generator, but it is not necessary. The engine will suck the gas through the marine hose. Now, run your generator (very important – check the oil – small gas engines use oil at a prodigious rate and because you are running this unit far longer (up to 9 hours with a 6 gallon tank) than you normally would, you must be very certain that the engine has adequate oil), and enjoy the fact that you probably bought yourself hours more of run-time and less refueling trips in the middle of the night. *Barry Humphus*

Dove Tail Demonstration Workshop

If you want to learn who to cut Dovetails, you need to go to Dick Trouth's shop on Saturday, November 4th at 9:00 a.m. Improve your skills and learn from masters. That is what this is about. Dick won't serve breakfast so either eat before coming or bring your own.

Extended Run System for Portable Generators – Part 2

One possible solution to your generator needs is to not use gasoline at all with your portable generator. Natural gas (NG) and propane (LP) are readily available to most people and they run lots cleaner than gasoline in small engines. A NG or LP engines not only runs cleaner for the environment, but much better for the engine itself. When everything else is unavailable (no power at the gas station for example), you will likely still be able to get either natural gas (from the gas company) or propane (from a local grocery store or propane supplier). The problem is that you may already have a gasoline powered generator.

One solution is to purchase another generator – one than will run on NG or LP. If it is LP, just get some consumer 5 gallon LP tanks and wait for the next storm to knock out your power. Like NG, LP does not go bad, does not gum up your engine and is readily available. Propane generators cost about the same as a gasoline one but are not as readily available. You can also purchase portable generators that run on natural gas as well and it has basically the same features as propane but is even cheaper to run (about 80 cents an hour versus $2 an hour for propane vs. $4 per hour with gasoline). Still another idea is to get a whole house generator that runs on natural gas, but these are very expensive at $5,000 to $8,000 with installation plus given where you live, you may not be able to get NG to your home.

Another solution is to purchase a tri-fuel generator. These will run on gasoline, natural gas and propane. But they are quite expensive – costing generally twice what a single fuel unit would run. What you need, as Sonny LeBlue pointed out at last month's meeting, is a conversion kit. This is a set of parts that will allow you to convert your gasoline engine generator to run on propane or natural gas that you can safely install yourself.

In my view the ideal conversion kit is one that converts my gasoline generator into a tri-fuel system. That way, I have the choice of running on gasoline, propane or natural gas depending on what I have available. And such kits exit. US Carburetion, Inc. (www.propane-generators.com, 800- 553-5608) makes these (as well as dedicated kits) and sells them for under $270, depending on the type of kit you purchase and the generator you have.

US Carburetion sells many varieties of their system. The Type 1 kit ($187) is for dedicated high pressure LP (like you might find on a farm). It requires that you modify the existing carburetor and if you want to convert back, you will need a new carburetor. The Type 2 kit ($227) also uses high pressure LP but can also run on gasoline (dual-fuel). Neither of these can run on NG, are for engines of over 13Hp and require nonreversible modification to the carburetor. The Type 3 ($227) and 4 ($267) kits are the same, but work with low pressure LP. All of the kits come with a regulator that steps down the pressure to the point where it is usable by the engine. If you have a high pressure LP gas system, you should give them a call before ordering

By far, the most common kit is either the A or C ones from US Carburetion. The A kit will permanently change your generator to run on NG or LP for $157. This means that you will need to modify your carburetor and purchase a new one should you want to go back to using gasoline. You must also purchase a NPSK hose kit ($44 for a 6 foot or $49 for a 12 foot) that adapts portable propane tanks (like the one with your gas fired grill) if you plan to use regular propane tanks that you can get at most grocery stores. Since most of us have access to stores (Albertsons, Kroger, Market Basket , Lowes, Wal-Mart, Home Depot, etc.) that sell these tanks and exchange them for full ones, this seems like the best deal. A #20 propane tank should get you 7-9 hours of run time depending on the demand and the HP of the engine.

The C kit ($187) provides a tri-fuel system, allowing you to burn all three fuels. The C kit is more expensive because it has more parts. Like the A kit, the C kit is designed for generators of 12Hp or less. You must also purchase a NPSK hose kit. With the C Kit however, you do not have to modify your generator. The kit installs between the air filter and carburetor of your engine.

When you order one of the kits, you need to choose the type of generator for which they are designed. Not all generator motors are the same insofar as where the carb is located and how the kit works. US Carburetion supports 16 brands of generators – and hopefully, they have one to fit yours. To order, get the model number off the generator itself, not the engine model. For example, my Coleman Powermate is Model PM0542000.01 but the US Carburetion only shows a PM054200, so I called them before I ordered on-line and you should as well. Don't forget the NPSK adapter kit if you plan to use propane. They also have quick disconnect hoses as well should you want one.

The bottom line is that I can now run my generator on gasoline, propane or natural gas. In addition, I have constructed a long run gasoline system. The conversion kit and adapter was $231 plus shipping of $12.90. The long run gasoline kit I constructed was $42 from the Attwood parts I bought at Wal-Mart and Academy.

Have fun and hope we never need these necessary items for a long time (until next Summer at least). *Barry Humphus*