

Steve Thomas, President  
Joe Comeaux Treasurer

Officers and Directors

Barry Humphus, Editor, George Kuffel  
Gary Rock, Jeff Cormier, Dick Trough

**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; Gary Rock: 433-1679; Eltee Thibodeaux: 436-1997; Dick Trough: 583-2683. Each have years of experience and knowledge.

### November Meeting Highlights

This month we met in J.W. and Velma Anderson's wonderful outdoor kitchen. It's always great to be there and thjnks to both of them for hosting this month.

Steve Thomas will step down as our President effective December 31, 2015 and John Griffith has volunteered to step up as the lead. Joe Comeaux will remain Treasure and Barry Humphus will continue to be Recorder and Newsletter Editor.

We received reports that Ronnie Krammer has been ill but is recovering Dick Troth has also had some heath issues of late so please keep them both in your thoughts.

Steve reminded everyone that the annual Christmas meeting will start at 10:00 A.M. rather than the usual 9:00 A.M. as a lunch will begin just after the meeting ends. Steve also reminded folks that if they plan to bring food, that they should convey to Steve what it may be as soon as possible.

Steve's Safety talk this month was about fire. His research shows that if you have a detector in your shop, the ones that detect heat are much more effective as standard smoke detectors can be fooled by fine dust that your wood machining can create. Even so, you should check these devices at least every six months and be certain they are not clogged with dust.



One tip that was discussed was the failure of belt sander belts. The glue that attaches the loop together is often subject to moister which results in separation should they sit for a long time. The recommendation is to keep sanding belts sealed in a ZIP-Lock bag or in a low humidity environment.

There was another dicussion regarding worn sand paper for final finishes. Indeed, this contains less grit, but it is the same size as before. The recommendation is to go through the grits regardless of how you may want to reuse worn sand paper. However, worn 220 grit is useful for removing those little bumbs left my coats of poly.

For Show and Tell, John Griffith showed us a very nice butcher block of sugar maple and black cherry made for a daughter and finished with WATCO butcher block finish. John also discussed a very old butcher block his grandfather made and this item was a duplicate.

Pie Sonnier brought us a neat dump truck and he said he has made more than 50 of them over the years.

This one included black walnut, oak and maple.

Steve McCorquadale has access to some many wonderful peices of wood and he brouht a cool table of water oak and finished in poly. Nice frame as well.. Don Elfert had a nice hamburger press with inserts for varied sized burgers.

Our host J.W. did a nice litte Sweat & Low holder box of peach and redwood plus he showed an old Standley #45 plane and a wagon jack beam boring machine. Steve Thomas showed us another pink dogwood beaded bowl using wipe-on ploy as a finish on top of acrylic.

Gary Rock did a caltapa bowl with brass highlight tacks and the Master paint that looks like metal. Joe Comeaux brought a few of his great pen turning work of acrylic and maple. Nice work as always from Joe

Be sure that you see Joe Comeaux at the Christmas meeting and give him your \$20 for your membership for the next year.

Coming Up . . . Annual Christmas Meeting at 10:00 A.M. at the wonderful shop of Lede and Larry Cooper.



## What About Belt Sanders?

On a belt sander, a single loop of seamless sandpaper is held taut between a motorized cylinder and a free-wheeling cylinder that drive the loop quickly in one direction. The "belt" portion, on both stationary and handheld belt sanders functions as the sanding surface. With their electric motors, belt sanders are designed to tackle larger, more extensive sanding projects than orbital or hand-powered sanders.

Because belt sanders are the work horse of the sanding world, they can both save you time and quickly ruin your project. Belts sanders function to remove material very quickly and very evenly. In the right hands they can be used for leveling, shaping, trimming and flattening. In the wrong hands or on the wrong project, they can wreak havoc.

All multipurpose, hand-held belt sanders use interchangeable, 3-inch wide sanding belts to get the job done. These belts come in a spectrum of grit counts and are made out of various materials. As to be expected, cheaper belts have shorter life spans and are much more likely to break. These cheaper versions also open your belt sander up to a whole host of issues that are almost non-existent with higher quality belts. For the most commonly used grit counts, between 80 and 120, it is best to invest in a high quality aluminum oxide or zirconia belts.

The correct method for belt sanding any given surface is to sand in long, straight, overlapping passes that move in the direction of the woodgrain. Gouging is a phenomenon that occurs when a belt sander leaves deeper curved gouges at the top and bottom of these passes. This tends to result from using overused or dirty belts, grit patterns higher than 120, or having debris between the sanding plate and sanding belt. Preventative measures to stay away from gouging include: using new or clean belts, staying away from ultra fine grit patterns, and keeping your machine clean and dust free. This problem is very common in new belt sander users.

The belt sander is the burliest member of the power sanding community, it frequently runs into problems when used on daintier, more sensitive tasks. While this seems self-evident, certain materials do not always throw up that red flag. One such material is plywood. While plywood is durable, reliable and cheap it should always be sanded with caution. This is because plywood's face veneer is only fractions of an inch thick, and is therefore easily sanded through. While the particle board layers beneath plywood's face veneer are sturdy and structurally sound, they tend to be unsightly when peeking out through an over sanded face veneer.

When the sanding belt on a belt sander fails to remain taut around the sander's rollers it tends to track back

and forth toward the path of least resistance. When this occurs during a sanding job it decreases the belt sander's efficiency and functionality noticeably. Normally this can be fixed by tightening the tracking adjustment knob usually located on the side of the belt sander's body.

It is common for this problem to occur even when the adjustment knob is tightened down fully. When this is the case, the problem usually comes back to the sanding belt. If the belt is loaded, stretched from overuse, or the wrong size for your sander it will track all day long. Also, cheaper models of sanding belts are notorious for tracking after only limited use. The solution to this problem comes back to personal preference. If you fed up with tracking issues on your belt sander, upgrade to a quality sanding belt.

Belt sanders, like other power tools, are victim to wear and tear. One trick to getting a longer and more fruitful life out of your belt sander is committing to cleaning your machine regularly. This process revolves around dust management. Dust buildup is any power tools worst nightmare.

While it might seem innocuous enough, the problems that stem from dust accumulation affect every component every tool. When it comes to belt sanders, the dust management system is built in, you just have to use it. The majority of belt sanders on the market today have a dust exhaust built into their assembly. The hard part is remembering to empty the dust receptacle regularly. During longer projects the dust receptacle should be emptied multiple times. This process can be made more efficient by attaching a shop vacuum hose directly to your belt sander's dust exhaust.

To make sure to prevent most of these problems, you have to buy a quality product. Read belt sander reviews to get a feel for what's on the market. You should also ask LCWW members or experts to help you out.

### More on Belt Sanders -- Belts

The best multipurpose belt sander takes a 3-in.-wide belt. You'll see machines designed for wider and narrower belts, but they're for specialized tasks. Within the 3-in. class, there are smaller tools that take 3 x 18-in. belts, midsize machines that take 3 x 21-in. belts and a couple of large sanders that take 3 x 24-in. belts. The smaller tools are lighter and easier to use one-handed for shaping and scribing. They're good for smaller work and casual use. The larger tools have more surface area and weight for smoothing wide surfaces. They're better for bigger work and shop use. The 3 x 21-in. machines are a good compromise. You'll find 3 x 18-in. sanders for \$50 to \$150 and 3 x 21-in. sanders for \$100 to \$250.

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You'll also find smaller belt sanders that take 2-1/2-in.-wide belts. They're light and very handy for one-handed use. Sanders with 4-in.-wide belts are heavy-duty machines best left to cabinetmakers.

Pick a belt, but not any belt I use 80- and 120-grit belts regularly, and rarely, 50-grit. Grits coarser than 50 leave deep scratches that are difficult to remove. And if you're doing finer sanding, you're better off using a random-orbit sander. Remember one of the rules of sanding: You can skip one grade of grit, but it wastes time and you'll just wear out belts skipping two. For example, you can go from 80 to 120, skipping 100 grit, but don't go from 50 to 120.

Aluminum oxide is the traditional grit material. You'll find it in less expensive khaki-color form, good if you need a disposable belt, and longer-lasting, dark brown premium belts. However, for grits of 80 and coarser, many people now prefer zirconia belts (sometimes called "planer" belts). They have sharper, tougher cutting particles that cut more aggressively, last longer and don't clog as easily. These belts are usually bright blue or purple. Zirconia belts cost slightly more than premium aluminum oxide belts.

#### More Belt Sander Issues

Common sander problems can easily creep up--especially on older models. Many newer models are designed with self-correcting features that plagued older versions. But, at some point, you may need to replace a part or make repairs. You may need to be a little mechanically inclined, especially if it is a motor problem but other problems may be solved with routine maintenance.

The older a power belt sander becomes, the more likely it will run hotter than it did in its youth. This problem will only get worse if you do not rectify the situation. Many manufacturers claim that the machine's gear train has been permanently lubricated with heavy grease so you will need not need to worry about gear grease. However, if your machine is older than the predicted life the manufacturer cites in the original paperwork, then you might need to replace the gear box grease. If an oily smell occurs when you are operating a sander, it is an indication that the heavier lubricating solids in the gear box grease have separated. To remedy the problem, open the gear train box and clean out all of the old grease, replacing it with bearing grease from your local auto parts store. Coat the gear teeth so the grease fills all tooth gaps, but do not leave excess grease in the box. The newly lubricated gearbox should keep your sander working for quite a while.

Normally, when a belt sander begins making noises it is a good indication the belt needs to be changed. Worn belts will affect the tension since the belt surface area has worn with use. If you have recently installed a new belt, check the tension by squeezing the belt with your fingers. There should be about a 1/4 play for a properly tightened belt. If the belt has no give, it is too tight and may cause a loud squeaky noise and overload the motor. You will need to adjust the belt tension by working the hex head set screw until you get the proper play in the belt. An excessively loose drive belt may fail altogether, slipping from the pulley, causing the sander to jump and or hesitate. Remove the drive belt cover with a Phillips screwdriver and tighten the drive pulley before replacing the cover.

If your power sander switch is in the "on" position but nothing happens, you may have worn motor brushes. Power sanders, like all other power tools that run at high loads for extended periods of time, will tend to wear down motor brushes, especially when using models designed for casual homeowner use. The brushes will not become worn all at once. In the beginning, you will probably experience a sluggish start where you may have to shake or smack the tool to get it to start. This is tell-tale sign the brushes are about to give it up. When brushes are completely worn, the sander will not start.

The abrasive belt protects the drum from debris, so you should leave it on when your sander is not in use. But it's essential to loosen the belt whenever you step away from the sander. This applies whether you're leaving the machine for a lunch break, or if you won't be using it for a few days.

As for the V- belts, they heat up when in use, making the material malleable. Reducing the belt tension prevents it from taking the shape of the sander's pulley system while it's still warm, which could cause chatter marks when you use the machine again.

It's also important to make sure you maintain the right amount of V-belt tension while you're using the sander. If the V-belt is too loose, it can slip. If the belt is too tight, it will wear out more quickly.

#### **Your Future in The Lake Charles Woodworkers Club**

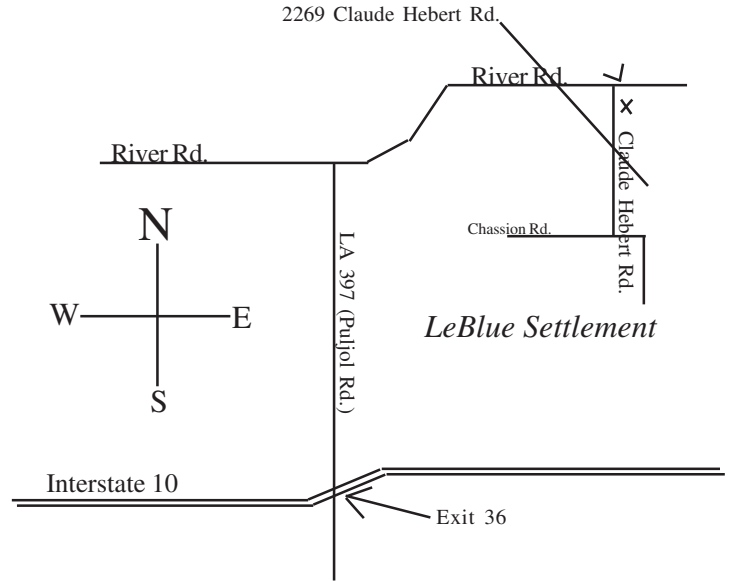
It is important to consider contributing to the LCWW with your membership this coming year. Your membership pays for our activities, the refreshments at our meetings the Newsletter and our contributions to the community of woodworkers and more. Please see Joe Comeaux at our future meeting. The cost is low at only \$20 per year for a family membership. You may mail your membership check to Joe at 1675 Campfire Rd., Lake Charles, LA 70611.

### December Meeting Location

It is without doubt that the shop of Leddie and Larry Cooper is one of among the best of those that we visit each year. The shop is large, comfortable and everyone has a great time there. Go nuts or get nuts as you wish!

To get to Larry & Leddie's shop, take I-10 East from Lake Charles to the LA 397 exit (Exit 36) and go north to River Road, were it ends. Turn right onto River Rd. Follow River Rd. to Claude Hebert Rd on your right and turn right onto Claude Hebert Rd..

Thier home and shop are at 2269 Claude Hebert Rd. on your left. The shop is the green metal building. If you need further directions, give Larry or Lede a call at 515-3391 or at home - 582-6516. Recall the meeting time is 10:00 A.M.



December 2015

Lake Charles Woodworkers Club, Inc.  
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