

Woodworkers Club of Houston

March 2004 • Volume 20, No. 3 • www.wwch.org

Woodworker Profile

Gary Weeks: Building a business around one thing done very well.

By Bill White

When company drops by unannounced, and they're treated well, it's a sure sign of Texas hospitality. There's a woodworker in central Texas that makes it a habit of welcoming dropins. Gary Weeks is a Texas woodworker that has turned a passion for woodworking into a growing business in the Texas hill country.

My wife and I were married next door at Blair House Bed & Breakfast. On a subsequent visit a few years ago we discovered that Weeks & Co. had moved in next door and were selling handcrafted furniture on a national scale. On a road populated by a metal artist and a glass blowing factory and showroom, Gary has situated his business on the outskirts of Wimberly, one of the most picturesque communities in the state.

After his construction business evolved into a woodworking business he lost his lease on the original shop. He then bought some land outside Wimberly on West Spokehill road and set to work constructing an ideal production shop. He and his seven employees took six months to build the current shop. He describes it as a "labor of love." When we dropped in he took us on a tour and showed the various parts of his operation. He likes to show the climate controlled finishing room—a room totally dedicated to finishing and keeping dust

out of the environment. All of Weeks & Co. finishing is done by hand.

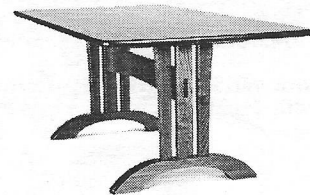
The main work room is a spacious shop with lots of proprietary jigs, fixtures and equipment designed by Gary to produce the Weeks & Co. furniture. There are several sanding machines that Gary and his employees designed and built. His special pride is the showroom where his furniture is displayed. "It's a showroom with with a low profile, and that's what I want," he said. "A showroom for us is essential, but it's not like we're trying to be a big retail front."

The Weeks rocker was introduced in 1993. This has become the backbone of Gary's business. In fact,

the whole business is based primarily on the rocking chair. The company produced its 1,000th rocker last October. He has developed a national marketing strategy, streamlined the building process and expanded his line into dining room tables and chairs and side tables. The chairs sell because they are well made, very comfortable and priced for value.

"I consider the price essential to the success. I've had a lot of people say you're selling too cheap. I try to make a little on them and try to make a lot of people happy with them. I want to get these [chairs] into the hands of as many people as I can," Gary said. The cherry rocker sells for \$1600.00 and the maple and walnut chairs sell for \$1650.00. A mahogany version

continued on page 2...



sells for \$1700.00 and when wood is available for a mesquite chair it sells for \$3700.00.

About 60% of Gary's furniture is shipped to 44 states, Europe and Australia. About 25% of his sales are generated through his web site, 20% from repeat customers and 20% by customer referrals. The rest comes from word-of-mouth and third party referrals.

Since very little of his product is sold locally it didn't take long for Gary to appreciate the importance of the shipping process. "I've been out there [on loading docks] and know what happens. But shipping is critical. We put as much attention into our crate-building as we have into our chair building," Gary says.

The future of Weeks & Co. will be much like its past: attention to detail, fine craftsmanship and a focus on marketing. High quality in production furniture is not an unobtainable dream. But very few furniture makers can really make it a sustainable business. What seems to separate Gary from the wannabes is his commitment to the entire business process. "We build furniture to serve this and subsequent generations. Likewise, I run this business for the long haul. My family may want to run it after I'm gone."

Gary Weeks & Co. 112 W. Spokehill, Wimberly, Texas 78676 • Tel: 888. 334. 0307 or 512. 847. 3187, www.garyweeks.com

Parts of this article were taken from an article on Gary Weeks in the recent issue of Woodshop News.

Resources for Woodworkers

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Information Resources Center, 401 M Street West, Washington, DC 20460 Tel: 202.260.5922, www.epa.gov

The Furniture Society, Box 18, Free Union, VA 22940. Tel:434.973.1488, www.furnitureociety.org

The International Woodworking Fair (IWF 2004) 6525 The Corners Parkway, Suite 115, Norcross, GA 30092. Tel:770.246.0608 www.iwf2004.com

Wood Education and Resource Center (WERC), 301 Hardwood Lane, Princeton, WV 24740, Tel:304.487.1510. www.werc-hdw.com

WoodLINKS USA, 304 Hardwood Lane, Princeton, WV 24740. Tel:304.431.7010 www.woodlinks.com

Forest and Wood Products Institute, Mount Wachusett Community College, 444 Green St., Gardner, MA 01440 Tel:978.630.9179 www.mwcc.mass.edu/html/fwp/fwp.html

Hardwood Plywood and Veneer Association (HPVA) P.O. Box 2789, Reston, VA 20195-0789 Tel: 703.435.2900 www.hpva.org

The International Wood Products Association (IWPA) 4214 King Street W., Alexandria, VA 22302 Tel: 703.820.6696 www.iwpawood.org

National Hardwood Lumber Association, P.O. Box 34518, Memphis, TN 38184-0518. Tel:901.377.1818

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Office of Information and Consumer Affairs, 200 Constitution Avenue N.W., Washington, D.C. 20210 Tel:202.219.8148 www.osha.gov

The Philadelphia Furniture and Furnishings Show (April 16 - 18, 2004), 162 N. Third, Philadelphia, PA 19106 Tel:215.440.0718 www.pffshow.com

Power Tool Institute Inc., 1300 Sumner Avenue., Cleveland, OH 44115, Tel:216.241.7333 www.taol.com/pti

Woodworking Machinery Industrial Association (WMIA) 5024-R, Campbell Blvd., Baltimore, MD 21236 Tel:410.931.8100 www.wmia.org/wood

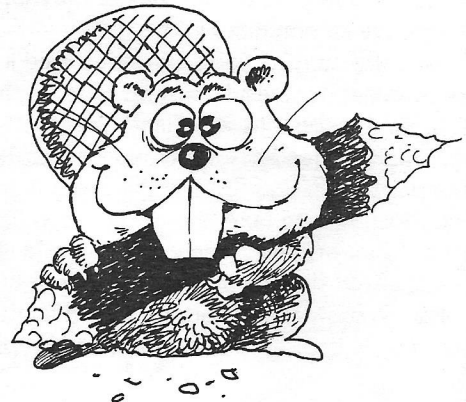
U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Products Laboratory, 1 Gifford Pinchot Drive, Madison, WI 53705-2398 Tel:608.231.9200

Architectural Woodwork Institute (AWI) 1952 Issac Newton Square, Reston, VA 20190 Tel: 703.733.0600 www.awinet.org

Hardwood Manufacturers Association, 400 Penn Center Blvd., Suite 530, Pittsburgh, PA 15235 Tel:412.829.0770

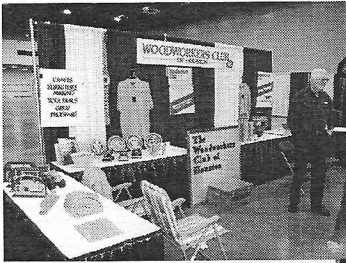
Wood Products Manufacturers Association (WPMA) 175 State Road E., Westminster, MA 01473 Tel: 978.874.5445 woodprod@wpma.org

Wood Component Manufacturers Association (WCMA) 1000 Johnston Ferry Road, Suite A-130, Marietta, GA 30068 Tel: 770.565.6660

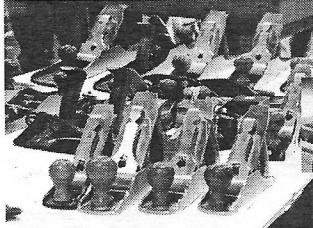
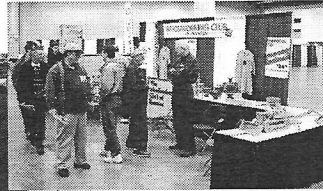


Woodworking Show

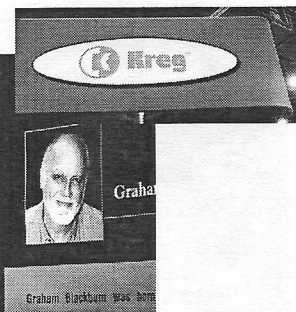
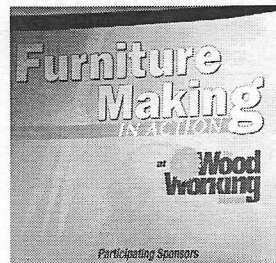
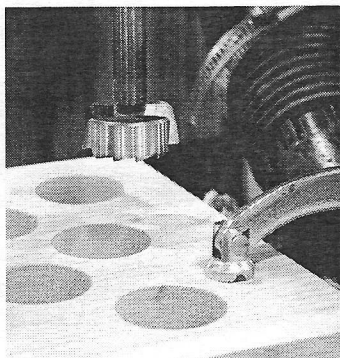
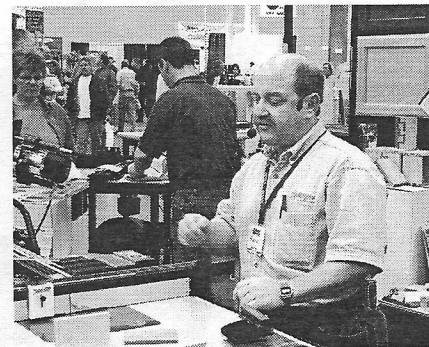
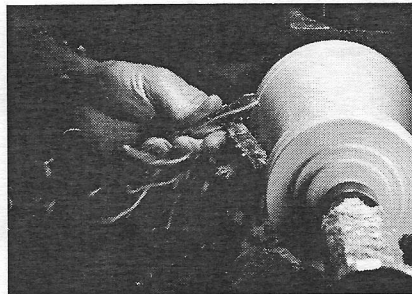
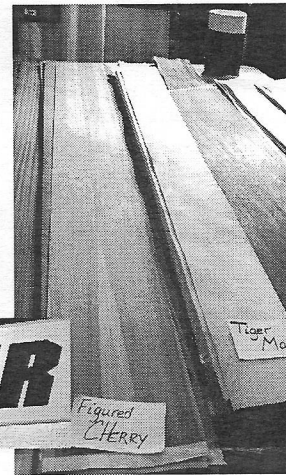
The February 2004 Woodworker's Show at Reliant Hall gave the Club a chance to mix with the woodworking elite. The show was a success for the Club because we brought in 14 new members. Thanks to all who worked the booth this year.



Frank Dorr

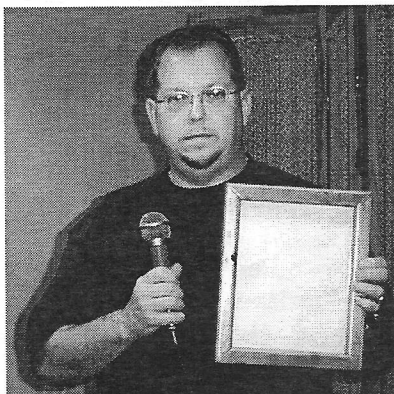


Frank Dorr

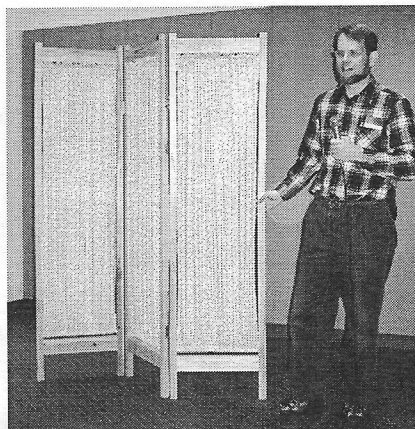


All photos by Bill White except as noted.

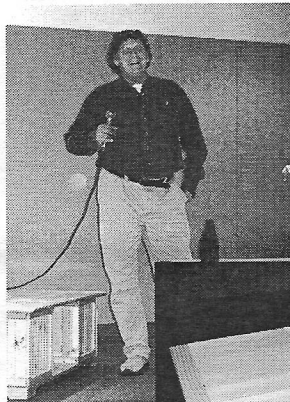
February's projects



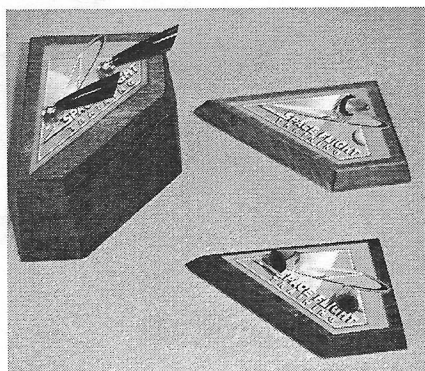
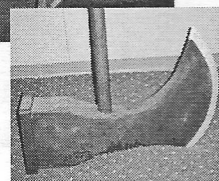
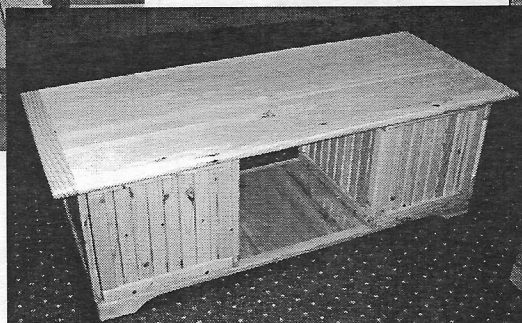
This picture frame of mahogany and birch plywood and handmade paper was created by **Joseph Rice**.



Rob Brayton explained how he made this room divider from stud 2x4s cut to size. You never knew there was good wood hiding under those studs, did you?



John Gay told club members how he built these collapsible cabinets using scrap wood. They are sealed with two or three coats then finished with polyurethane varnish. Square head screws hold everything together. John's plywood axe (lower right) scared kids at halloween.



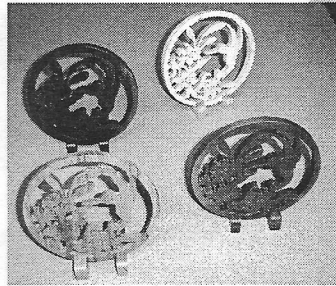
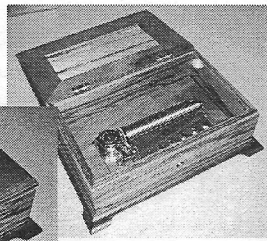
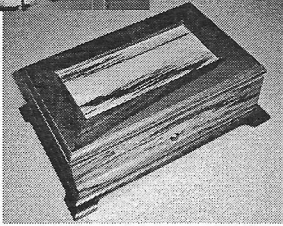
OOPS!

The picture at the left should have appeared with the copy below in the last Newsletter.

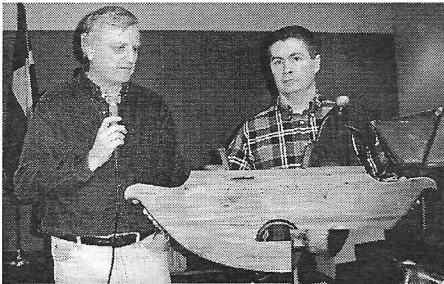
Gary Rowen made good on his promise to make a music box for his boss. The mahogany music box is topped with a pen and pencil set. The smaller pen/pencil set is made of solid rosewood. The larger pen set of poplar stained with Rosewood is one of twenty that Gary made for his office mates.



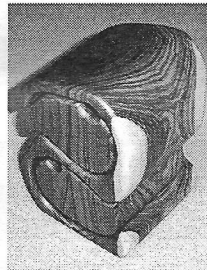
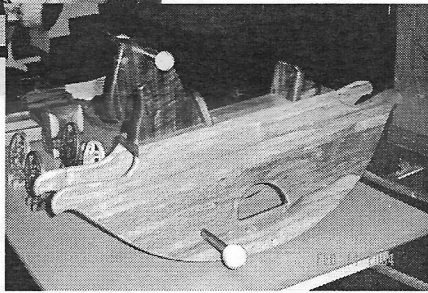
Bill Hochmuth was very proud of his Swiss movement music boxes of walnut, red cedar and zebra wood.



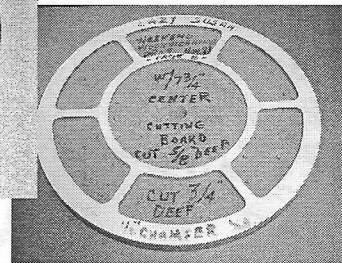
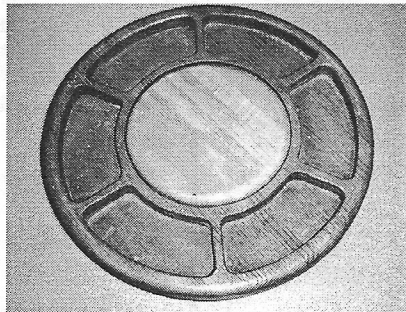
John Murray scrollsawed these ornaments from patterns that his wife found. About an hour apiece was required.



Jack Hutchison reproduced this 17th century design of a child's rocking horse from a museum in London. These rockers are made of pecan; handles and head of walnut and knobs of birch. Screws hold everything together.



James Powers bandsawed this box from Kingwood.



This lazy susan was superbly crafted by **Chuck Maxwell** with his pin router. He took about three passes through the router to get the final depth. Also shown is the jig he used to rout the openings for the poker chips... I mean snacks, peanuts, etc.

All Current Work photos by Gary Rowen

Club Contacts

- Jim Robertson, *President* [REDACTED]
- Walter Mason, *Vice-President* [REDACTED]
- Gary Rowen, *Secretary* [REDACTED]
- Al Morrow, *Treasurer* [REDACTED]
- Ken Kooser, *Director* [REDACTED]
- Paul Koury, *Director* [REDACTED]
- Tom Matkin, *Director* [REDACTED]
- Mike Kelly, *Director* [REDACTED]
- Gary Rowen, *Webmaster* [REDACTED]
- Joe Edelen, *Name Tags* [REDACTED]
- John Gay, *Book Library* [REDACTED]
- Blaine Stokes, *Video Library* [REDACTED]
- Loretta Buckley, Bill Hochmuth, *Coffee Committee*
- Bill White, *Communications Director and Newsletter*
- Editor* [REDACTED]

"...sometimes funny, often entertaining and always educational.."

The Woodworkers Club of Houston meets every month on the second Saturday. We're a diverse group that enjoys a good joke, encourages woodworking and is dedicated to the premise that the best way to learn about woodworking is from other woodworkers.

Sure, there are plenty of good woodworking schools around the country. And several of our members have attended them. But not everyone can afford either the time or expense of these courses. For most of us the WWCH is a good alternative.

Every meeting has a "Problems and Solutions" section where members are encouraged to ask a question or two about a woodworking problem that may have them stumped. Other members will then contribute their insights and experiences.

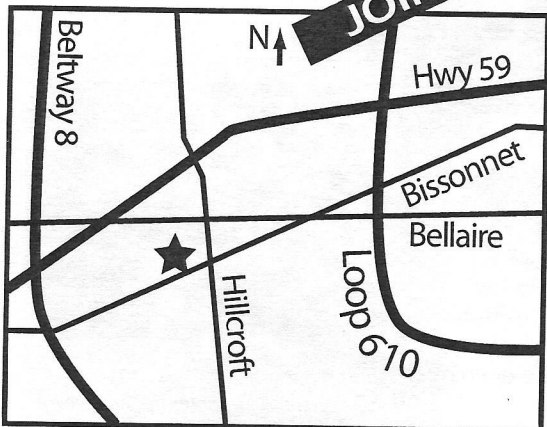
We also have a "Show and Tell" period as well. Members that are working on or have completed a project show us and explain how it was made and finished. Sometimes the unfinished work is more instructive than the completed work.

We will also have a fairly formal monthly program presentation. This can consist of tool manufacturer's presentations, finishing demonstrations, joint making demonstrations, tool use discussions and much more. The Woodworkers Club of Houston is a great woodworking value. Try us. You'll like us.

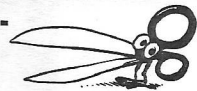
WWCH Monthly Meeting

Second Saturday of every month
 We open the doors at 8:30am, program starts at 9:00 and winds up by 11:30am.

Bayland Community Center
 6400 Bissonnet
 Houston, TX 77074



Woodworkers Club of Houston Membership Application



A WWCH Membership is a chance to learn about woodworking, visit with other woodworkers and see some fabulous projects. Your membership includes a monthly newsletter, access to our video and book library, invitation to field trips and occasionally we collectively buy tools at discounted prices. Considering the cost it's a genuine bargain. So, cut out this application, include a check for \$24.00 yearly membership and mail it to the address below. And join us once a month for a good time.

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Tool Recalls

Sears router

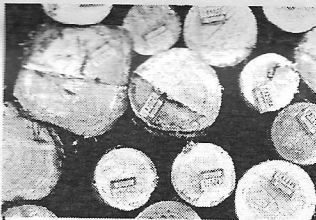
A Sears Router has been recalled recently: Model No. 315.17510 with a date code of A0304 and lower. It seems the switch can get stuck in the "On" position—a serious risk. The routers were marketed between November 2002 and January 2003. Owners can contact Sears at 800. 932. 3188 or their nearest Sears store for an exchange.

Skill battery charger

Battery chargers for the Skill Warrior Drill have been recalled. This may affect about two million owners. The chargers were sold between July 1994 and February 2003. Owners should immediately unplug the chargers and call 800. 661. 5398. Replacement drills and chargers will be provided at no cost.

Makita circular saw

Makita 7 1/4 inch circular saw No. 5470NB has been recalled. The saws were sold between April 1998 and November 2002. Saws with an "N" preceding the serial number are excepted. Bring the saw to a Makita service center for a free repair or call 800. 462. 5482 for more details.



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Black and Decker table saw

Sixty-one thousand Black and Decker table saws model BT2500 with date codes 200128-CT through 200148-CT have been recalled. They were sold between April 2001 and April 2002. Contact Black and Decker at 866. 357. 0324 to find out how to get a repair.

Hitachi circular saws

Hitachi USA is voluntarily recalling

about 14,300 circular saws. The lower blade guards on these saws can stick in the open position, exposing the blade and posing a serious laceration hazard. The recall involves 7 1/4-inch circular saws with model numbers C7SB2 or C7BD2 and serial numbers that begin with C62, C72, C82, C92, C02 or CN2. Consumers should stop using these circular saws immediately and return them to Hitachi for a free repair. For more information, contact Hitachi at 800. 706. 7337.

March meeting silent auction:

Art Chester will have 20 pieces of Corian in various sizes for auction. The largest size will be 23" X 35." All proceeds from silent auction items are donated to the WWCH.

In Memorium

Teresa LeGrue, passed away February 4, 2004. Loving wife and partner of Steve LeGrue, and proud mother of three sons Mason, Eric and Giles. Teri and Steve founded *The Cutting Edge Woodworker's Supply* in 1993 and have been long standing members and steadfast supporters of Woodworkers Club of Houston. Teri was also active with Boy Scouts of America and served as District Commissioner.

M. A. "Vic" Vucinovich, passed away February 10, 2004. Vic is survived by wife Shirley, daughter Lisa, brother Richard and sister Cissy. Vic was a 36 year employee of Schlumberger and was active in many woodworking clubs, including WWCH where he had served as the emcee for the Show and Tell portion of the monthly meetings.

Deaths in 2003:

Jim Clark and Jim Turner

The Club sends our sincere condolences to these families. We will miss the fellowship and enrichment these members brought to our club and to the woodworking community.

Woodworkers Club of Houston

11319 Atwell Drive
Houston, Texas 77035

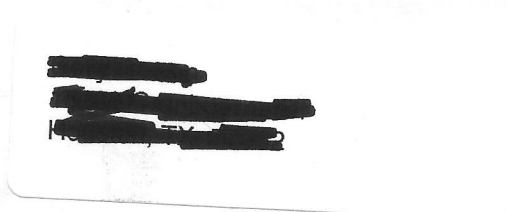


MARK YOUR CALENDARS:



WWCH Monthly Meeting: March 13

Next Monthly Meeting: April 10

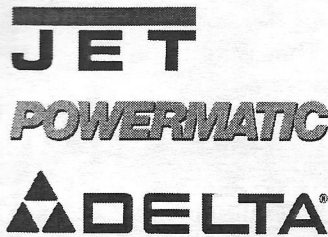
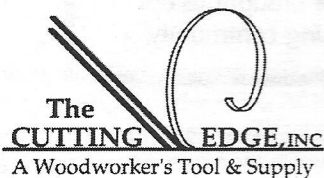


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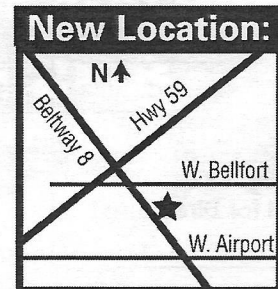
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