

Woodworkers Club

OF HOUSTON

VOL. 7, NO. 1

JANUARY, 1991

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DECEMBER MEETING

The program was on Mesquite presented by Ken E. Rogers of the Texas Forest Products Laboratory, a part of The Texas A & M University System. The Texas forest Laboratory is the largest state lab in the United States.

Most woodworkers only equate mesquite with the barbecue grill, a group called Los Amigos del Mesquite (Friends of Mesquite) promotes the wood as furniture-class stock. Due to their efforts, mesquite's reputation as quality cabinet wood seems to be spreading. The Los Amigos del Mesquite is an international organization with members from England to New Zealand.

The following excerpts are from an article "A Pesky Tree To The Texas Rancher, Mesquite's A Prize For Woodworkers by Barbara S. Greene. If the world should ever be destroyed by a nuclear holocaust, some people say only three life forms would survive: Cockroaches, Coyotes and the Mesquite Tree. That's what some Texans say anyway.

The Los Amigos del Mesquite are helping to turn the pest into profits. The members fall into three basic categories: researchers and other associated with academia; "chippers and chunkers" who sell mesquite chips for use in barbecuing; and woodworkers who craft items ranging from delicate Christmas ornaments to large dining room tables and chairs from the wood.

It is the woodworkers who, perhaps, sing mesquite's praises the loudest. "I've been working with the old tree going on 10 years," said Robert Hensarling of Uvalde, Texas. "It's the only wood I work. It's a gnarly old twisted, wormy old thing. It's a mess to work with, but the finish is worth it."

Hensarling, who owns South Texas Fine Woods, makes his living from mesquite. He has designed and built a rocking chair, patterned after Sam Maloof's renowned rocker, from the wood. He also makes dining room sets which

he sells for \$8,000--\$22,000.

Herb Nordmeyer of Knippa, Texas, does a little crafting with mesquite, selling such items as ornaments, briefcases and quilt racks. He also operates a mesquite mill, one of only about a dozen, that he is aware of at least, within a 500 mile radius.

One of the biggest drawbacks to working with mesquite wood is its small size. Mesquite can be as large as 48" wide by 60 feet tall, but those are the exceptions. Most trees range in diameter from 12" to 20", it has a spreading type of growth habit, so rather than having a single trunk that goes up, it tends to spread. This adds to the grain pattern but it also causes a problem trying to find logs of any size.

Mesquite is milled into lumber that is 24" to 42" long and 3" to 8" wide. Mesquite is a dense wood with a specific gravity of about .70, making it heavier than Teak. Woodworkers concerned about using such tropical woods for environmental reasons consider mesquite as a substitute, particularly for smaller items. Woodworkers admire mesquite for its low and even shrinkage factor. It is a hard wood, nearly twice as hard as oak. The heartwood turns a rich reddish-brown with age. The little-used sapwood is a light yellow shade.

It is one of the prettiest and most unusual woods there is, so striking that you never need stain. Just a clear finish to bring out the beauty of the grain.

Mesquite has very little shrinkage problems which makes it ideal for turning.

Mesquite acreage throughout Texas and the Southwest grew from about 44 million acres in the mid-1940's to around 78 million today.

The tree originally grew mostly in Mexico and along the southern border of Texas. Its growth spread rapidly during the latter part of the 1800's as a result of cattle drives through Texas.

Cattle love to eat mesquite beans, three days later, they would plant trees.

Another problem is the large waste factor associated with mesquite. The estimated waste on any given load is to be 85-90 percent.

Because the process of logging and milling mesquite is time-consuming and difficult, the wood tends to be expensive. Some retailers in San Antonio sell it for as much as \$21/BF.

The absence of a standard grading system, the mesquite users have devised their own. Grade 1 lumber--essentially clear on both sides with maybe a few bird pecks--retails for \$10/bf, kiln-dried, rough-sawn; Grade 2--essentially clear on one side--retails for \$7/bf; and Grade 3--which has "character", pecks and knots on both sides--retails for \$4/bf.

Many of the woodworkers often work with a lower grade of lumber, filling in the cracks with epoxy or resin.

Los Amigos del Mesquite is in the process of forming a lumber marketing cooperative which will offer larger quantities of kiln-dried, graded lumber for sale.

Ken also had samples of items made from mesquite and a slide presentation ranging from letter openers to turned vessels to roll top desks.

Ken presented us with a wider use of mesquite than we thought possible.

In San Antonio during the days of the Alamo the streets were paved with Mesquite blocks. Today a woodworker just North of San Antonio builds Roll Top Desks out of Mesquite which he sells for \$12,000. He makes 3-4 desks a year as a hobby.

Ken also introduced us to Texas Ebony, which is more dense than African Ebony. It grows from Alice, Texas to Mexico. Texas Ebony is mainly used for inlay and accent work as the size of the lumber is usually no more than 1 x 4 x 4'-0 long.

We would like to Thank Ken for a very informative and interesting program.

DECEMBER DINNER AND SHOW AND TELL

The Dinner and Show and Tell was a huge success, we all chowed down on a great dinner, Don introduced the new officers and we had a very interesting show and tell. The items ranged from the Best of Show Entry a Walnut chair to turned lamps, jewelry box, music box, a case made to house an English chest set, butlers table and dominions, etc, etc.

There was a mix up in who was to order the Award ribbons and they will be awarded at the January meeting. To all the members who will be awarded a ribbon it would be nice if you would bring your prized items so that all the membership can see these creative and well crafted creations.

RAFFLED ROCKING CHAIR

Dan Shaklovitz raffled off the Rocking chair at the dinner with the proceeds going to our Charity sale. We collected \$315.00 and the winner was Lynda Wartko.

CHARITY SHOW DONATION

We finally have a final count on the amount that will be donated to the Make-a-Wish Foundation. The Check for \$5,900.00 will be presented to Make-a-Wish at the January meeting.

CHARITY SHOW

Each year we vote on whether to have a charity show and sale and also what charity we shall donate to. We have to start planning early--so if you have any ideas or suggestions, talk to one of the officers or board members or feel free to attend a board meeting.

THE YEAR 1991----MEETINGS

Meetings will be held on the 2nd Saturday of the month for all of 1991 at the Bayland Community Center. The Board meetings are almost always held the following Thursday at a different members house each month. If you would like to attend, just ask at the Saturday meeting or call Zatis as to where the Board meeting will be.

FIELD TRIPS

We are working on arranging some Field trips in 1991, if you have any ideas or any contacts that might help us please tell Zatis.

WOODWORKING SHOWS

The Woodworking Show of North America will hold its show Friday March 1st thru Sunday March 3rd. We will again have a booth this year. We need items to display and members to work the booth. We will set up a schedule like the charity show so each member working the booth will only be there a short time.

Pasadena Industrial will have their Spring Tent Show in April.

DECEMBER DINNER 1991

We have contacted the Rice Faculty Club and the only available date is Friday December 13, 1991. Our regular meeting will be next day Saturday the 14th.

DUES FOR 1991----DEADLINE JANUARY 31, 1991.

We want to publish a roster for 1991 as soon as possible and as complete as possible--so get those dues in or you'll miss out.

Also if you don't pay your dues you'll miss out getting the newsletter. Well enough of the PAY UP or else.

WORKSHOPS AND CLINICS

The first clinic will follow the January meeting and will be a continuing clinic on the Making of a Musical Instrument: How to start? What type of materials?

Bill Beggs will be holding a hands on Bandsaw box workshop--dates to be announced.

SAFETY

Robert Sandlin showed us a heater that is safe for use in the woodshop. It is an enclosed vacuum steam heater--no flame--it releases heat but no steam mist. Available at Builders Square.

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

Bill Baker needs to know where he can get special size sanding belts. One suggestion was Santa Rosa Tool Supply in California.

Henry Reed was looking for a local source of PEG to treat green wood--available locally at the Shopsmith Woodworking Center.

One member needed a source for a white grinding stone--available at Big Joe Tools and Rex Supply.

Keep your bisquits dry--no not the ones you sop up your gravy but the ones you use for good tight joints. One of the problems with this part of the country is our high humidity which can cause the bisquits to swell, just what they were designed to do--but not till you need them to. One suggestion is to store them in the freezer or you can dry them out in the microwave. Bisquits should fit loose when assembling---also wait till the glue is completely dry before sanding--or the wood at the bisquit could sink.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bill Beggs wanted to thank Don Sloan and Chuck Maxwell for making 400 hearts for Christmas Decorations for the make-a-wish foundation.

Jimmie Harp and Andy Anderson got together to build a sleigh and reindeer for Santa to carry toys as gifts for children at M. D. Anderson Hospital.

Bill Sallans was contacted by the Greater Cleveland Chamber of Commerce inviting anyone to their Cleveland Festival. The Festival is held each month on the first Saturday of the month from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Anyone interested in renting a booth space should contact Doris Whatley, the event coordinator, on any Thursday or Friday from 11:30am to 3:00 pm at (713) 592-8786.

Jimmie Harp recommends the new Delta 16" Scroll Saw, it is very quiet and cuts smooth and sells in the \$170.00 range a very good buy. Available at Pasadena Industrial Supply.

SHOW AND TELL

Denis Muras showed a maple hopping frog and a jointed hound dog. Plans from David Wakefield toys finished in 3M clear.

Chuck Maxwell made a Fire Engine Mailbox--plans from Meisel.

TO JOIN W.W.C. OF HOUSTON FOR 1991, BRING TO THE REGULAR MEETINGS OR SEND YOUR DUES TO WOODWORKERS CLUB OF HOUSTON P.O. BOX 34481, HOUSTON, TEXAS 77234. MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO WOODWORKERS CLUB OF HOUSTON. SEE FORM BELOW FOR DUES INFORMATION.

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***** PLEASE CIRCLE THE MONTH IN WHICH YOU JOIN.*****

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FEB: \$16.50 MAY: \$12.00 AUG: \$7.50 NOV: \$3.00

MAR: \$15.00 JUNE: \$10.50 SEPT: \$6.00 DEC: \$18.00

JANUARY MEETING

WHEN: JANUARY 12, 1991 9:00 A. M.

WHERE: BAYLAND COMMUNITY CENTER
ON BISSONNET AT HILLCROFT

THANK YOU ALL

1990 is down the tube but what a great year it was for the club. This time of the year we thank everyone for all they have done to make it such a successful club. We should thank all of the members because without a good membership the club just won't exist. We have very good attendance at the meetings, almost one half of the membership attend, not many clubs can boast that amount.

After reading an article in WOOD magazine about how other clubs must entice their members to attend, with door prizes, etc. It's nice to see that we have a membership that really enjoys woodworking and the fellowship that woodworking can foster.

The Club could not function without the committees and hardwork by its members.

All of the volunteers that have presented programs for the membership is very greatly appreciated.

The direction and purpose of the club could not function without the officers and board of directors.

We would like to thank all of the Advertisers for their support by buying ads in this newsletter. Their support helps to keep our costs as low as possible. We hope that they all had a successful 1990 and we hope that they will continue with us in 1991.

We would also like to thank John Arnett and his crew at Speedy Printing for helping us get your newsletter out on time, no matter what challenges we present.

As newsletter editor I would like to personally thank Thad Brown for preparing and licking all those stamps--more than 2700 badly tasting stamps (per year) and getting them mailed and to your house on time. Keep up the good work.

We hope everyone had a Happy and Safe 1990 and Wish the same for 1991.

SEE YOU ALL IN 1991 !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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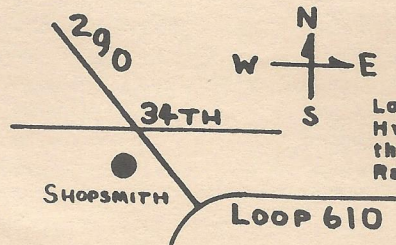
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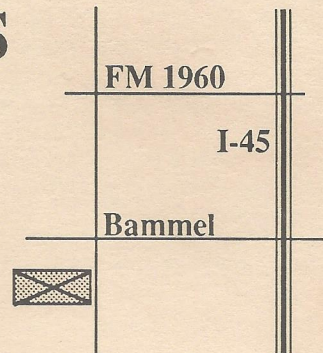
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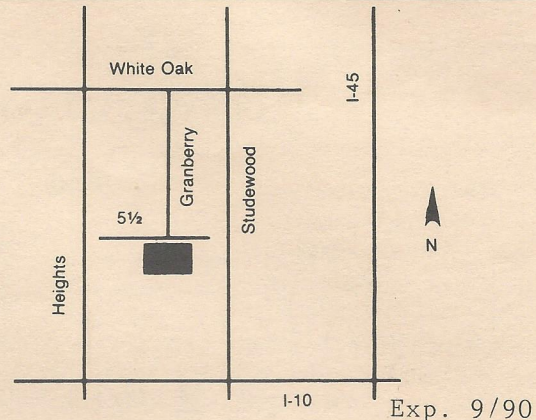


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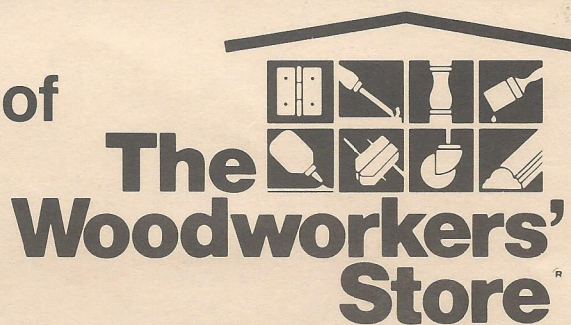
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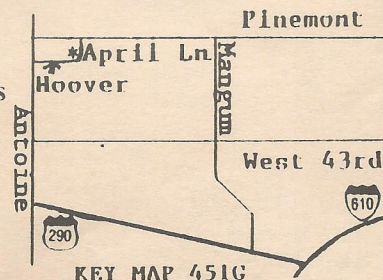
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