

October Meeting by Richard Pierce

The October meeting with thirty five members in attendance was held at Pete Sieperda's shop and is it a thing of beauty! It is huge, has a great dust collection system, numerous work benches accompanied by lots of high quality tools. The wood storage area is super and provides for easy access. One can also see from this picture Pete has accumulated quite a selection of wood.

This meeting concluded the Router series conducted over the past year. Demonstrations were provided by three of our senior members and not coincidentally three of our most talented.



First up was our host using a commercial router table to demonstrate making drawers with a sliding dovetail joint which is extremely strong. The joint can be created with a hand held router but is easier to accomplish using the router table. Of all dovetail joints, the sliding dovetail may be the least well-known, particularly among relative newcomers to woodworking. However, the sliding dovetail may be the most versatile of all dovetail joints. It is not only very useful for connecting two pieces of stock at a right-angle, as in a drawer or case, but can also be used to connect the parts of assemblies such as cabinet doors or cutting boards, attaching table legs to pedestals, joining shelves to cabinet cases and much more. A sliding dovetail joint is made by cutting a single tail down the length of a board's edge, which is slid into a corresponding pin-shaped slot in the receiving piece of stock.

Pete created a small demonstration drawer using a sliding dovetail joint to attach the drawer sides to the drawer front and back. The process is simple to describe and with a little practice a cinch to complete.

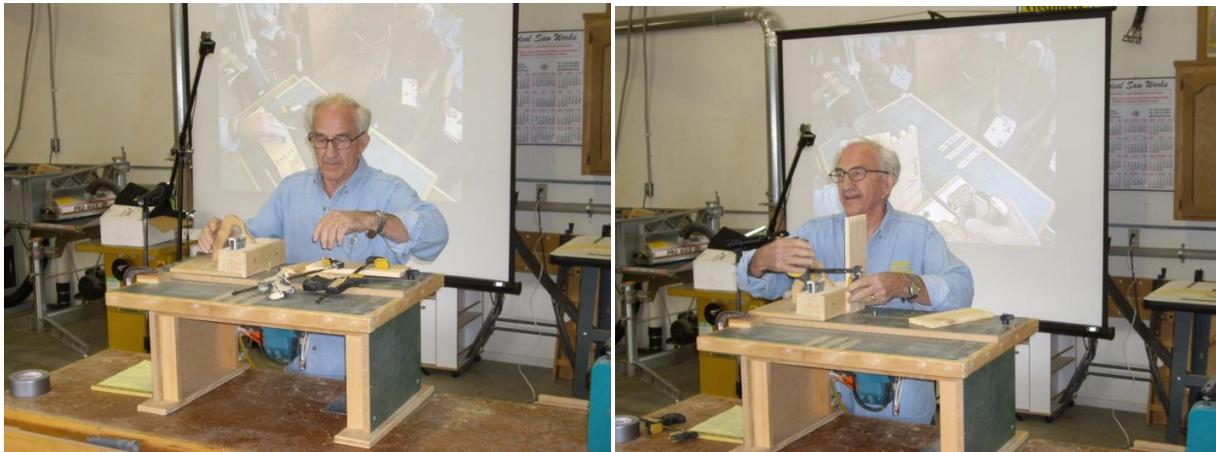
First cut two stopped pin-shaped slots in the inside face of the drawer front and two through pin-shaped slots in the drawer sides to secure the back. Use masking tape on the router table as a reference point for the stopped pin slots. Inset the pin slot the appropriate distance from the edge of the drawer side to accommodate drawer slides or other design features. The miter gauge was utilized to move the material thru the bit.

Now comes the fun part. Using the router table fence one must mill a tail down the length of both ends of the drawer back. The theory is to cut ½ the width of the pin on one pass, turn the board around and cut the other half. This is one of those processes where you kind of “sneak up “on the final size. After a few passes, a bit of sanding corners and some light taps the joint fit fine...Pete’s recommended reading for the router is titled “Woodworking with the Router” by Bill Hylton and Matlock which you can



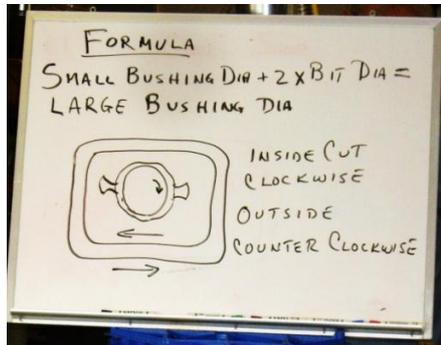
purchase through Linden Publishing.

Al Sindlinger was next to demonstrate cutting box joints using his homemade router table made from sink top cutouts and a homemade box joint jig from American Woodworker # 113. Al stated he isn’t cheap but does save the ball bearing from empty spray cans!



Box joints are significantly stronger than regular butt joints. They provide more gluing surface and some frictional hold as well. In addition to being stronger, box joints are much more attractive than butt joints. As demonstrated the box joint is very easy to cut using a straight bit and the jig. After cutting the first joint the work piece is moved to place the joint over the reference. Then pass the work piece through the router bit cutting the next perfect box joint and so forth. The ends of the joint should be just a touch proud and can be sanded smooth. The contrasting look of the end and side grains is very appealing, creating a decorative checkerboard effect. This joint is a very nice way to display your woodworking skills and craftsmanship. In addition numerous stress tests conducted comparing the dovetail joint to the box joint reveal the box joint to be the stronger!

The final presenter was Howard Atamian who instructed on pattern routing which is a technique for cutting pairs of shapes that will allow them to fit together absolutely perfectly. Finished cuts are



made with a straight bit in the router. The technique for cutting with the router as described in the above picture is “inside cut clockwise”, “outside cut counterclockwise.” Howard’s formula for bushing size as described above is “Small bushing Diameter size plus 2 times bit diameter size equals Large Bushing Diameter. This formula is essential to understanding and executing inner and outer pattern cuts using the router.



Once again inlay routing results in one piece completely contained by the other as shown in the picture left. Bushings, collets and templates of any shape, any size may be used in this process.

Howard demonstrated with a 1/4 inch straight bit. Alignment of the bit within the collet is essential. It must be dead center. Use a dial gauge if necessary.

When routing your stance should be similar to that of a prize fighter; feet spread to slightly wider than your shoulders with one foot slightly behind the other.

Use double sided tape to attach the template to the workpiece. Ensure the collet is rubbing against the edge of the pattern at all times as you rout. The male insert routed by Howard fit exactly within the female pattern. The next step is up to you. Practice all the techniques demonstrated today, pick one you like and use it to create a fine woodworking project.