Newsletter

http://www.midwestwoodworkers.org

January 2013

President's Letter

Greetings Woodworkers,

I hope that your holidays were everything you wanted them to be, and that the new year is too.

The MWA Christmas dinner was well attended by members and their families, as well as by adults and children from Coyote Hill. It was very pleasant, and reportedly less noisy than some years. The food brought by members was wonderful. Even more importantly, the children had a good time, and were happy to take home their cars.

The January meeting will be on Monday, January 28th. Don't forget that we have a special program in Carla McFarland's presentation on gourds, miniature tools, and dyes.

Earlier this month I saw a television commercial with some law firm asking people to call if they have been injured in the last few years on a table saw. The commercial stated that technology has been available for years to prevent table saw injuries, but major manufacturers have refused to adopt it (this is presumably a reference to the Saw Stop technology that stops the blade as soon as human body parts or hotdogs touch the blade).

As I understand it, the table saw manufacturers decided that customers would not pay enough more to cover the cost of adding the new technology. I guess the law firm will learn to sift out all of the table saw injuries that result from kick back, which the Saw Stop technology does not prevent. The lawyers will presumably argue that the manufacturers were negligent in not making the saws as safe as possible (there are more issues with that theory than we have time to consider here). It will be interesting to see if a court will find the saw manufacturers responsible for an operator's faulty saw operation, and to see if our saws end up being recalled to add Saw Stop technology!!!

We have arrived once again at the time of year for "The Woodworking Shows." For those who are not familiar with them, they are a three day event that travels around the country, in which a zillion tools are advertised and demonstrated, and a significant number of national woodworking experts present short seminars on many woodworking topics. The Woodworking Show in Kansas City is coming right up, the weekend of January 25, 26 + 27, and will come to the St. Louis area on February 8, 9 + 10. I am going to my first one, in KC on Saturday the 26th. Anyone who would like to ride along and share gas money please contact me at (573) 356-7681, or at JGorman@ptclabs.com. —I expect to be gone from early morning till early evening.

For information or to buy tickets ($12.00 at the door or $10.00 on line in advance) you can go to www.thewoodworkingshows.com. Once you are on their web site, if you click on the Attendees button, and then choose Seminars, you can see each of the presenters and read about each of their presentations. The discussion of each presenter also indicates the times of their various shows, but the times may vary by city. The Monday before they get to Kansas City or St. Louis, you can click on "Click here" near the top of the Seminars page for the local schedule.

I hope you have all had opportunities to make some sawdust. I finally had time to put together the new band saw that has been sitting in my basement for months, astride the palette that formed the base of its shipping crate. The first order of business in getting it together, even before assembling the bandsaw table, fence and a few other attachments, was to assemble the mobile base recommended by Grizzly to go with the band saw.

Putting together a mobile base for a new tool should be a fairly simple experience, especially when it is the specific mobile base recommended by the tool's manufacturer. However, I seem to be fated to turn simple experiences into weekend-long projects.

The recommended Shop Fox mobile base is plenty heavy duty (rated for 1,300 pounds), and a pretty simple construction and assembly. But the minimum width of the mobile base was wider than the narrow side of the bandsaw base (which is a relatively long and narrow rectangle). In other words, making the mobile base as narrow as possible, it would still not fit snug up against the band saw! I could fill in the approximately ¾ inch gap with wood. I even considered filling it in with 4 or 5 inches of wood to extend the width of the base and lend the assembled unit greater stability. But I couldn't figure out whether a wider base would interfere with where I would want to place my feet when working at the band saw. After all, it was possible that there was a reason for the size and shape of the band saw's base. So I filled the ¾" gap with a piece of wood.

The weight of the band saw made assembly of the mobile base a little more challenging. I had to figure out how I was going to pick up this 425 pound 19" band saw and set it down into the assembled mobile base. The instructions for the mobile base talked about using things like fork lifts and hoists. None of those are available in my basement. I had originally anticipated leaving the band saw on the shipping palette and then sliding it off into the assembled mobile base. But the bandsaw was ultimately extremely heavy and I lost confidence in my prospects for success with this method. I could see me getting hung up half way into the base, with no ability to get it the rest of the way in—or back out.

Ultimately I decided to use the "assemble mobile base around the tool" alternate assembly method offered by the instructions. This would involve tilting of the bandsaw back and forth, rather than lifting, to slide things in place. Because the mobile base is on wheels, this approach presented its own additional challenges.

As I proceeded with assembly of the mobile base I noticed another issue. The wheels of the base sit outside of the frame and are bolted into metal holders that stick up above the frame. This raised height exists only on the two sides of the base that you choose to put the wheels on. Because the band saw base is much longer than it is wide, you would normally want to assemble the wheels oriented to be able to push the thing lengthwise. Pushing it sideways would be much less stable. Putting these outboard wheels on either side of the narrow base dimension, aimed lengthwise along the base, would have the added advantage of expanding the width of the mobile unit, giving the bandsaw more stability.

As I proceeded to set up the mobile base in this orientation, and after I bolted the wheels in place, I sat the mobile base next to the band saw. There I noticed that the wheel housings being on the long sides prevented the access door to the lower wheel of the bandsaw from opening!!!! Thus, unless you build a thick wooden platform to set into the frame before adding the bandsaw (which would raise the access door up over the wheel housing, but which raises additional issues regarding the "assemble around the machine" approach) you are required to assemble it in the least stable configuration! The wheel housings add to the length of the base instead of the width, and you have to move this tall heavy bandsaw by pushing it sideways, with much greater risk of tipping. How much thought could Grizzly have put into this mobile base recommendation? They made sure that the weight capacity of the mobile base was adequate, and must have then thought they were done.

So . . . back to the assembly table. Ultimately I decided to go with the least stable configuration, on the theory that I had killed way too much time already and didn't want to spend substantially more time trying to just get the mobile base set up. I probably wouldn't move the band saw very often, and I would move it very carefully. Also, if in the future using the band saw demonstrated the inadequacy of this approach, and if the band saw was still in one piece, then I could take the mobile base apart and start over.

Once I got the mobile base reworked and loosely in place, I was able to use pipe clamps to press the mobile frame tight against the base of the bandsaw before tightening down the bolts on the frame of the mobile unit. So it does fit snug and hold tight.

There is also a large eye installed at the top of the band saw, which I can use to anchor the bandsaw to the unfinished basement ceiling if I am cutting especially heavy or awkward pieces of wood (to keep the band saw from tipping over).

Now that I have assembled the rest of the band saw and tried it out, for normal use the base seems stable enough.

See you at the meeting on January 28th. Until then, I hope you keep it safe and have happy woodworking experiences.

Joe Gorman

Tentative Schedule of Events
Midwest Woodworkers' Association
2013

Date	Day	Time	Event	Location
January 28, 2013	Monday	7:00 PM	MWA Meeting	Boone County Millwork
January 30, 2013	Wednesday	6:30 PM	Toy Project	PET Facility
February 25, 2013	Monday	7:00 PM	MWA Meeting	Boone County Millwork
February 26, 2013	Wednesday	6:30 PM	Toy Project	PET Facility
March 25, 2013	Monday	7:00 PM	MWA Meeting	Boone County Millwork
March 27, 2013	Wednesday	6:30 PM	Toy Project	PET Facility
April 22, 2013	Monday	7:00 PM	MWA Meeting	Boone County Millwork
April 24, 2013	Wednesday	6:30 PM	Toy Project	PET Facility
May TBA	Saturday	TBA	Club Picnic	TBA
May 29, 2013	Wednesday	6:30 PM	Toy Project	PET Facility
June 24, 2013	Monday	7:00 PM	MWA Meeting	Boone County Millwork
June 26, 2013	Wednesday	6:30 PM	Toy Project	PET Facility
July 22, 2013	Monday	7:00 PM	MWA Meeting	Boone County Millwork
July 24, 2013	Wednesday	6:30 PM	Toy Project	PET Facility

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