

A MACHINE LIVES!

G Joseph Wilhelm – Roatan August 2024

As I arose last Thursday the 8th, I realized that I have completed the 74th year of my life. This “organic machine” in which my soul resides is holding up well. I embrace Clint Eastwood’s advice of “Getting up in the morning and not letting the old man in.” I wholly and heartily endorse this both physically and mentally as a mind-set, in as much as both the life and person become much more interesting. Come to think of it, I don’t recall ever “acting my age”.

Retirement is a lot more work than I anticipated, especially now that the drought is over and rain showers are back on their unannounced drenching schedule. I have about six or seven projects that are in the works like a juggler spinning plates on a stick. Never can tell which one will require attention next or become my wife’s current priority. My woodworking space on the deck area has been converted to a nursery, so now I have to run up and down the stairs to the shop in order to make all the wood cuts for the lab.



Interesting to note; except for the Areca palms, the plants you see here were grown in 4 – 6 weeks from pups or cuttings from plants already on the grounds. The Arecas grew a foot or more in that time.

A whole new spectrum of possibilities has come to the fore since restoring the table saw. After having suffered the slings and arrows of hurricane Irma’s salt spray rain, and nearly 4 years of storage neglect, this 45-year-old machine did not have any seized fasteners, motor bearings or

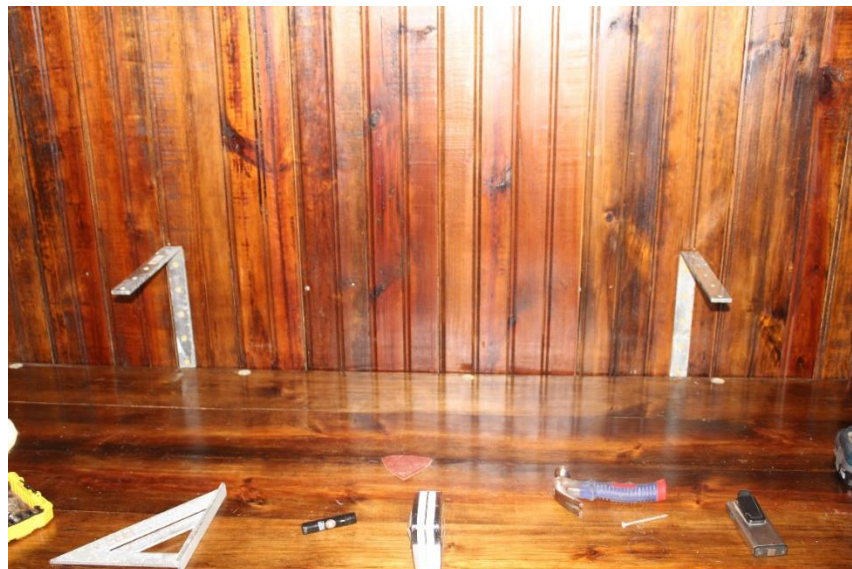
adjustments when disassembled. It is in like new working condition and is now the best tool in the shop. Next in line for this treatment is the equally aged Milling Machine/Drill Press, which has been disassembled with the same success and will be required to finish the lab. Modern manufactured tools would simply not have been able to survive this kind of treatment.



Disassembled Drill press on the bench

Precise longboard rip cuts, resawing, sizing and trueing boards to within a 32nd of an inch are now within my capabilities. Here is what's been accomplished sine last month:

The lowest (primary) shelf has been fitted. From here out the initial install will be with unfinished wood so corrections can be made when something pops up that's not on my list of unforeseen circumstances (aka "stupid mistakes"). I used ¼" thick steel brackets for rigidity and so they will not encroach on the under-shelf space. They will be cleverly encased with wood.





Shelf in place and the two machinist's chests in their designated space.

These chests are knock offs of the Gerstner tool chests. They were purchased from Harbor freight some time back for \$49 each and while not of the same high quality, they are 1/10th the cost. They go for around \$100 now. The chrome hardware will be removed and they will be refinished as a "furniture" style chest to match the bench.

Below is the test fit of the shell for the back half of the cabinet that will be built for this space



More time this month was consumed digging thru shipping boxes for any and all related equipment for this dissecting/slide prep station. A shelf/cabinet concept was then developed for the items on hand, most efficient use of the space available and ascetically pleasing period design. The table saw was now fully tuned up for accuracy so I trashed the original design and was able to incorporate a local solid wood that comes in edge-glued planks to form $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick 4' x 8' sheets. It's what I got when I asked for plywood. It looks like birch but lighter weight. I'll still call it birch. Has a nice tight grain and looks to finish well, we will see. It's a breeze to work it on the table saw and now I can cut just about any moulding trim I want. I'm in heaven!



This is the shell construction of $\frac{3}{4}$ " pine with the $\frac{1}{2}$ " birch over it. The incomplete doors are cut down so they don't hit the upper shelf arch when open. The open center part will be its own cubicle with as yet to be determined accessibility. This cabinet, when complete, will fasten to the wall with six screws and uses all the available space above the open lid of the tool chest. Once this cabinet is done and test fit, a duplicate will be a lot easier to make for the right-side viewing station to make this lab presentation as symmetrical as possible. These are closed cabinets although, all of the remaining cabinets should, I think, have glass doors. Again, we shall see.



The doors will have shelf or other custom storage in them and are shown in their open position relative to being hinged on their front edge. This gives easy access to all the shelved items without disturbing anything else. There is a lot to put in here!

Topical Tip:

I will conclude this month's discourse with a tip for the microscopy tinker.... Typewriters! I have a collection of the same make and model typewriters (some, not all) that Ernest Hemmingway used during his writing career. The original thought was to have them on display with a hardcover copy of the book he probably wrote with it. The Royal Quiet Deluxe I have is only a few serial numbers removed from the one on display at the Hemmingway house in Key West. The first portable Corona model I purchased (Ernest used this model as a war correspondent during WWI) arrived as a "\$25 parts only" example so I purchased another. The original purchase has provided a treasure trove of levers, screws, hinges, gears, adjustable mechanisms doohickeys and thingamajigs that correspond to the American and British (not metric) made microscopes and accessories of the early 1900s. They have been invaluable in some repair/restoration applications. Some of these "parts only" offerings are inexpensive and are used as sources for some impressive typewriter parts sculptures.



Corona portable/folding typewriter



Look at all those mechanical thingies! Parts forever!

The rain is back and the bar is open. Therefore, I bid you and yours, blessings and good fortune. If, for some obscure rationale you wish to contact me, I cheerfully accept and acknowledge any and all communiques at: gjw8844@gmail.com

Adieu for now.

G Joseph Wilhelm

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