

Shavings

By Glen Friesen

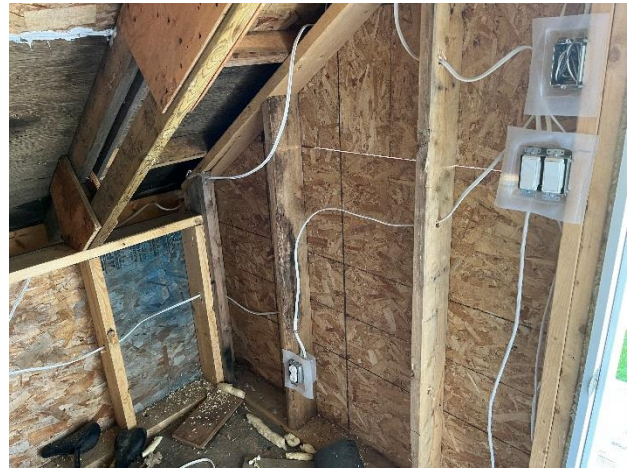
Well, the days are notably shorter as we head into October. I am sure noticing this as I try to finish off a couple of outdoor projects. I guess it gives me more time to write this column and do other things. I am going to keep working on my outside projects until the snow flies and hopefully all of my other projects can wait while I finish these. First on the need to finish before winter list is my lumber storage area. My goal is to finish the interior of the storage area and also to complete the enclosure at ground level. If I can finish the lumber storage and the same space on the opposite side of the building, the storage will be complete. I am hoping to complete the stucco on the exterior of the building next summer. But I guess I will get as far as I get.



(My goal is to complete the outer surfaces of the interior of the lumber storage area. I would also like to finish the same feature on the other side of the building.)

I have been very busy this last year and now it starts all over again. I have nine students that will start classes in my shop. While I enjoy teaching young students, they definitely make my life busier. In order to open my shop to students again, it needed to be cleaned up. A major source of clutter was my unfinished workbench on the far side of the shop. I had cut all the components for the 20 drawers to be built and they were in several stacks on the

floor. Not conducive to having students in the shop.



(My neighbour roughed in the electrical for me late in September. It is great to have lights, especially in my lumber storage areas.)

I had also planed and ripped 1¾ inch blemished pine strips that would eventually become the countertop. The countertop is quite large so there was an abundance of shavings from the jointing process. I do not have dust collection to my jointer yet and this process generated a huge amount of shavings. So, a major shop cleanup was needed to be able to have students in my shop this fall.



(I am going to glue up the last of the strips that I cut for one last counter. This is exactly how I built the main counter for my new shop cabinet.)

This large mess was generated largely by one project. A long time ago, I decided that I needed to construct a cabinet on the far side of my shop. I constructed a shop cabinet 96

inches long, 24 inches deep and 39 inches high. Eventually, there would be 20 drawers, five in each of the four 24-inch-wide modules. My goal with this design was to store as much as possible to finally get my shop organized. I used some unique materials and techniques to construct this storage and I thought that I would share my progress with you and developments to date in this month's column.



(It was a lot of work to get the shop looking more like a teaching shop again. Making the countertops generated a lot of shavings. I moved five student lathes back into the shop.)

The Need:

I first discussed this project in the February 2024 version of Shavings. So, I am sharing a bit of a review and then will move on to the newly constructed areas. In the quest to get my shop cleaned up and organized, I realized that I needed more storage for all the stuff that I had accumulated over the years. In the end, I only had one area of my shop where it was possible to add extra storage. This was under the larger window on the north west wall of my shop. I thought that I needed a section of countertop and as many drawers as I could fit in that space. So, I thought about it for a while and started to make plans.



(Eventually all my turning accessories will be in a bank of drawers and I will know where everything is and have a place for it. A real win!)

The Material:

As I made my plans for this 8-feet of standard base cabinet, I realized that this was going to be more expensive than I had bargained for. I had planned to construct the cabinet units out of MDF, but when I checked out the price of a sheet of $\frac{3}{4}$ MDF, I thought that I would need to postpone my plans for a while.

Like I discussed last winter, the more that I thought about my choice of materials, the more I thought that I did not need MDF. Finally, I decided that OSB would be just fine. MDF was approximately twice the cost of OSB. Making the cabinet work out of OSB made this project doable.



(Using OSB as the foundational construction material has worked out exceptionally well for a shop cabinet.)

The Specifications:

I decided to construct four, 24-inch-wide base units, 24 inches deep and 39 inches tall. I used $\frac{3}{4}$ inch OSB for the gable ends. This OSB is slightly less in thickness than the stated $\frac{3}{4}$ inch. I used this thicker OSB for the gable ends, module bases, the partial cabinet backs, toe kicks and the drawer sides. This worked really well. I decided to use $\frac{3}{8}$ OSB for the drawer bottoms.

The Construction Details:

I actually cut the gable ends to 23 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches in depth and glued on a $\frac{1}{4}$ " piece of pine to the front edge. Since this entire cabinet build was made from OSB, I wanted to cover all the potentially visible OSB with pine, so to the casual observer, it would look like the cabinet was constructed of pine. So, the stiles, rails, visible gable end and the drawer faces are all made of pine. Is OSB a suitable material for shop cabinet construction? I think that it is. I decided not to apply any finish to the interior of the drawers so they feel a bit "rough."



(Eventually all the OSB that is seen will be covered with pine. I am very happy with the overall look of the unit.)

When I researched on the internet to see what had been done using OSB for cabinetry, I discovered a number of people who made their kitchen cabinets out of OSB. In my opinion, this goes too far. I would think that one would have to fill, sand and paint each panel before they could be used as kitchen cabinetry. I plan to build another small cabinet for my shop and I

will also construct it out of OSB and then cover it in pine.

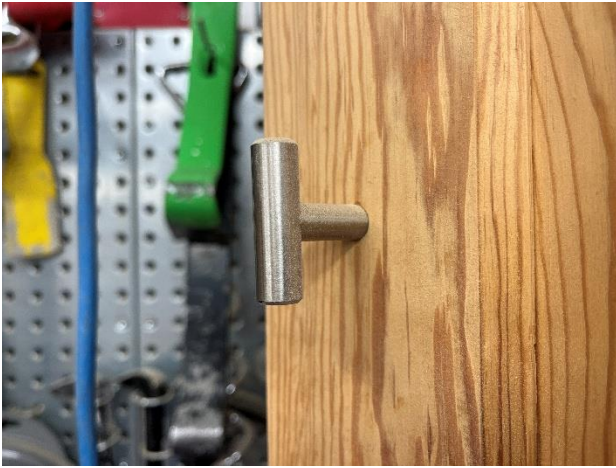
The Drawer Slides and Pulls:

To make the cabinets even less expensive, I could have built my own slides, however in my opinion, this is false economy. Drawers are such a fundamentally important part of a cabinet build. If the slides do not work properly, it is very frustrating. I decided to go with what I consider middle of the road drawer slides. I purchased 22-inch side mount slides from Princess Auto. These are full extension, 100 pound weight capacity slides which are strong enough for the weight of the objects I intend to store in the drawers.



(Serious drawers!)

For drawer pulls, I decided to use simple small "T" shaped pulls. I am starting to regret my choice of pulls as my cabinetry approaches completion. I fear that they will easily hook on to my pockets or other parts of my clothing. I guess I will see how this works out as I start using the completed cabinet.



(These "T" pulls work well on upper cabinets, but may catch clothing on the base cabinets.)

The Countertop:

I have been constructing counters in my shop from scrap pine. I did the same for my latest cabinet addition. As we worked with my students in my shop, they used my standard 1-inch local pine. Often, there were leftover pieces when we made 1 x 4's out of 1 x 6's and often there were pieces that were either cracked or blue stained and not suitable for student projects. I ripped all these scraps into 1 ¾ inch strips and rotated the best edge up. Eventually, I laminated 32 rows of 13/16 material together to form my countertop. The width of the counter ended up at 26 ¾ inches which is perfect for this cabinetry.



(My counter glued together and sanded. It turned out really well!!)

The length of the countertop is 10 feet on the wall side and 8 feet on the front. This is a bit unusual, but it makes that corner of my shop a bit more useful. Remember, my shop is in the shape of an octagon. Laminating this large

countertop with many pieces was quite a challenge. I made the first row a bit longer than it needed to be. From there, I made sure that there was always a sizeable overlap of the joint by the next ply. I applied a generous amount of glue to both faces and then used my brad nailer to tack them together. I glued and pinned approximately half (13 inches) of the counter together, then I clamped it with pipe clamps and allowed it to dry. Then, I ran it through my thickness planer and surfaced both sides and ended up with a piece of countertop 1½ inches thick.



(An added benefit to this section of counter it that all my sharpening tools can comfortably rest on it.)

My thickness planer can only plane up to 400 mm (15¼ inches) which made making another piece of similar width was necessary. So, I made another section and then once the glue on the second lamination was dry and the piece planed to 1½ inches, I laminated both larger sections together. Once that glue joint dried, I used a portable belt sander and random orbital sander to blend out the connecting glue joint. I really like this countertop a lot. It looks great, is tough and really heavy. It is a good, solid piece of counter and I am looking forward to using it.

Finishing the Countertop:

Once the counter was assembled and installed, I screwed the four modules together and mounted the counter top to the base units. I decided not to attach the cabinets to the wall because it is so solid that I saw no need to.

The finish that I decided to apply to my fresh countertop was the same as I applied to the

other sections of counter that I have built to date. I used an epoxy finish. The first counter that I did with epoxy has proven very durable. I purchased a Saman kit from Rona and mixed it up as per the supplied directions. Applying the epoxy was very straight forward. Just read the directions on the box and did what it said. It is that simple. I did an excellent job on the first $\frac{3}{4}$ of the countertop, but on the last quarter I spread it out a bit too thin and it got a bit rough. But since I am going to mount my sharpening stuff on the countertop, it will be fine. If you use epoxy, make sure that you use enough epoxy on all areas.



(Applying the epoxy. I love this counter!)

The Finale:

Well, my counter is still not completely done. However, it is useable. The drawers are done and installed, the drawer faces are figured out and the countertop is functional. So, this article serves as an update for my progress. If you are interested in this build, I have done five or six YouTube videos on different aspects of the construction. Please go to RLDR Custom Creations and check it out and oh yes, while you are there, make sure that you like, share and subscribe. Thank you!



(This counter will be very useful.)