

## Roatan 7 - More Lab Activity

I do my most brilliant work when I'm not thinking.

Let me place this into the current contextual structure as applied to woodworking:

I find it a rare occasion that an unsolicited opinion from any source, other than my lovely spouse, is deserving of more than a passing acknowledgement (Did you know that "trouble and strife" is an actual synonym for "wife"? Who would have thought...?). These opinions include the many spontaneous mental concoctions of my own. So, in order to progress, I quit thinking and let inspiration wash over me until an intelligently creative and superbly magnificent vision appears to solve the task at hand. This can be a lengthy convoluted process and a perfect artistically themed approach to profess (read as "excuse" ) when my wife expresses the same Papal admonishment pronounced to Michelangelo at the Sistine Chapel: "When will you be done?".

Here's my story and sticking to it.



When we parted last, the rainy season had ended (now revised to "slowed down"). I Finished sanding the bench and applied a faux grain with stain to any small filler patches remaining. Bench is perfectly flat.



The weather started deteriorating and we covered it with plastic and a tarp. Had to stay this way for the next eight days.



When finally uncovered for a check, the bench had taken a 1-1/2" twist to the right as a result of underestimating the humidity and water content percentage of the wood. Covered it back up again and directed attention inside.



In order to help straighten the bench, I needed a robustly fixed, level surface to bolt it to. The horizontal 2"x4" you see here is lag bolted every 18" along the back wall and perfectly leveled to  $< 1/8"$ . The same treatment will be applied to the left and right sides and with the bench lag bolted down on them it should mitigate the twist acceptably. This was the only deviation so far to the original plan as laid out in Roatan 5. The back wall above the bench has a coat of wood conditioner pre stain.



Period correct provincial stain was then applied. Put some lights under the canopy/shelf, a new fascia board and life will be good.

Then I noticed it. And when I confirmed it, my whole engineering psyche was affronted. The floor was not level!!! 1-1/4" lower on the right. Definitely noticeable with the level back bench support in place. The canopy shelf was built parallel to the floor and will require a remedy. Leveling the floor is not an option and may not be necessary. A creative baseboard application should alleviate the visual incongruity and supplication to the carpenter gods for at least having the back wall bead board vertical to level instead of the floor. To keep things moving and not starting over with paragraph 1, I returned to finishing the bench so I wouldn't have to stop thinking while the solution washed over me (see? I *can* multitask!).



Stained and finished bench top.



Bench in place



The asymmetrical location of the lag bolts is the result of them being strategically placed to correct the twisting and warp. The right-side wall will be finished in bead board to match the back wall.



To level the canopy/shelf, would require unloading, complete disassembly and rebuilding from scratch as the bracing was not originally spaced correctly.



Unfinished bead board in place.



This is the progress to date

I am envisioning this bench divided into three “stations”. On the left, a station for specimen dissecting, preserving and preparation with a 1920s Spencer stereo scope. Slide prep including a period ringing table, vacuum chamber, hand centrifuge scales etc.

The middle and right-side viewing station for his and hers compound microscopes of the era and/or stereo setups with various illumination and contrast capabilities.

Shelves will be fastened to the back wall, set up and sized to the apothecary collection I have, not only for use but also display and capable of having sides and glass doors attached to keep dust to a minimum. Once sized and in place, all equipment placed under the shelf/canopy will be fully functional with display antiques in glass cabinets above. It will even have accent lighting.

The whole room will be a mini museum. The final configuration will require a great deal of not thinking.

A parting question; does anyone know the years of manufacture for the Aus Jena Laboval and Amplival scopes?

The work pace should pick up from here but no guaranteed completion date due to unforeseen circumstances or my lack of mental clarity.

I hesitate to ask anyone for better ideas because it would overload my email account but, you may contact me at [gwilhelm@metsonmarine.com](mailto:gwilhelm@metsonmarine.com)

Cheers and God’s blessings to everyone

G Joseph Wilhelm

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