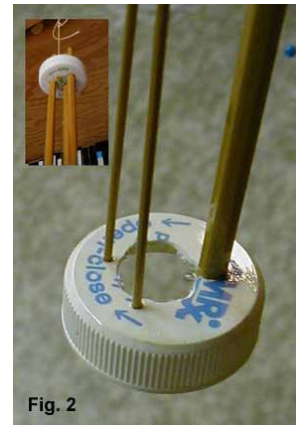

The Finishing Room: Drip Tubes, a Viable Alternative

Article and photos by Tony Spezio

I had already made my pull motor assembly. I found that where I was going to put it would not work due to a low ceiling. About that time, I joined the **Rodmaker's Listserve** and saw a post about draining the varnish rather than pulling the rod. Thanks to that post. My rig is fancier than it needs to be but yet very simple. It consists of a plywood frame that holds a length of plastic florescent tube protector with a petcock drain valve on the bottom. I bought an 8' tube from an electric supply house for \$5, and the rest of the materials I had lying around. The upper and lower plates are removable with the tube. This is to simplify loading and unloading. The tube is 50" long and the stand is 40" high with a shelf for the tube to rest on at 8". I made leveling feet for the stand that I don't even bother with now. The petcock is screwed into a 1/2" X 11/8" plywood plug in the bottom of the tube.

The procedure is to fill the tube with varnish to about 3 or 4" from the top, and let it sit until all the bubbles are gone. Remove the tube assembly from the stand; I have to tilt it some to insert the rod due to the low ceiling. The rod is held on the top of the tube with a clothespin. I have the tube marked with strips of masking tape at 4 1/2 ". The empty can is placed under the drain petcock and the petcock is opened slightly. I watch the flow of the varnish and time it to the first 4 1/2" mark. After doing a number of rods I kind of know how much flow I need without having to time it. What I watch for is that the varnish doesn't run away from the flow on the wall of the tube. Without guides, it takes about 10 minuetts for a 42" blank; I do all three sections at one time. I just made spacer from a couple of RX pill container caps. This is time saving for me. The three sticks can be left in the tube, but it takes longer for them to dry. I just remove them from the tube. The varnish is drained. The whole assembly is removed from the stand, tilted enough to withdraw the strip assembly, and hung to dry. The lower cap keeps the sticks from rubbing on the sides of the tube on the lower end. You do have to be careful not to drag the sticks on the upper part of the tube while withdrawing them.





On the final varnish with the guides wrapped, I still do both tip sections at the same time. The butt section is done by itself. The ferrules of the tip sections are wrapped with masking tape. Each section is placed in a clothespin with the guides facing away, and the wraps lined up with each other. This is so that each stop you make for the guide wraps will only have to be done once for both tips. The tip tops are taped and a spacer is placed between them to keep them apart. The tip tops and spacer are then taped as one. To keep the tip sections from getting against the tube, three quilt pins are stuck into the tape like a triangle at the tip tops. The two clothespins are taped together; this acts as a spacer at the top. After the varnish is drained, the tip sections withdrawn and hung, the tape at the bottom is separated with a slit from a razor.

Do the same at the upper clothespin to separate the two tip sections. There is no reason that the tips can't be done separately. This just saves me time that I could use for doing something else. For the butt



section, the ferrule and cork are taped and three quilt pins stuck into the tape at the ferrule.

This may not be the way it is normally done, but it works for me.