

Chuck Middleton, President
Dick Hopes, Sec/Treasure

Officers and Directors

John Marcon, Barry Humphus,
Bubba Cheramie, Brent Evans, George Kuffel

NOVEMBER MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Members of the Lake Charles Woodworkers were honored at a luncheon held at Vancherie's Dockside Tuesday, November 14th. The luncheon was held to celebrate the participation of many organizations and individuals who participated in the construction of the Shiver Me Timbers park that opened at the Civic Center in September.

LCWW members present for the ceremonies were Brent Evans, Barry Humphus, George Kuffel and Lee Frazier. Unable to attend the luncheon because of prior commitments were Bubba Cheramie, Dick Hopes, Chuck and Charlene Middleton and Burl Vincent. The Lake Charles Woodworkers received an engraved acrylic trophy in honor of our participation in the project — the construction of 34 signs and twelve Intarsia historical plaques for the park.

The Master of Ceremonies, Kay Barnett handed out the certificates of appreciation, plaques and trophies to the participants as well as roasted a few of the team captains and leaders of the park-building organization. The food was great.

ABLE TO CANE PART 2

Early Saturday morning, November 10, 1883, Tom McKinnon road his mule "Sweetheart" to Main Street in Rusk, Texas. He stopped at the Courthouse Cafe to have coffee and wait for Issac Abrams' General Store to open. He had gotten word that the rocking chair he ordered from Abrams had arrived. It was a small rocker, made of bird's-eye maple with a caned bottom and back. And not too expensive at \$3.50.

One hundred years later, I started the process of restoring this rocker. The cane had been replaced by a solid wooden bottom some 70 years before and the chair had been painted four or five times. Removing the bottom and back was not a problem and I discovered that the chair had a series of equally spaced holes around the bottom and back for strand cane. I had to partly disassemble the chair to remove all of the coats of paint. It was when the paint came off that I realized that the chair, inherited from my grandmother, Carrie McKinnon Humphus, was made of bird's-eye maple.

The rocker had held my grandmother in her mother's arms and subsequent children, grand children and great grand children in their mother's arms in it's 100 year life. It was time to restore its natural look and beauty.

Strand cane is sold in varying lengths from 12 to 20 feet. A hank is 1,000 feet and typically costs about \$10.00. Most suppliers sell it by the hank. Don't think you are getting too much. I used about 800 feet recaning this rocker.

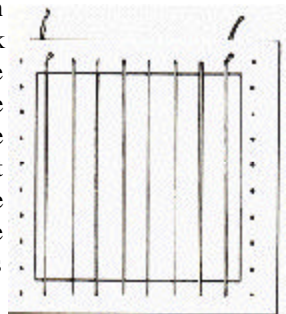
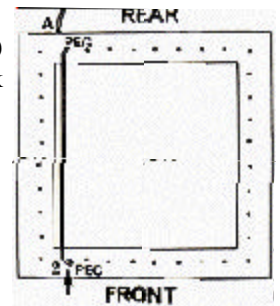
The key to successful recaning is using the same size material and replacing it in the original position. If there is no old cane present, measure the diameter of the holes. The diameter of the hole is the cane width needed. Remember that you'll

pass several strands through each hole, so don't over-estimate the cane width. Cane comes in 7 sizes from Super Fine, Fine Fine, Fine, Narrow Medium, Medium, Common and Narrow Binding.

The tools you'll need are a few 2" or 3" lengths of 1/4" dowel sharpened on one end with a pencil sharpener, a sponge and an awl. A plastic bucket will also come in handy to soak the cane and binding in warm water to make it pliable. If there is existing cane, remove it and clean out the holes. If the frame is loose or requires finishing, do it now.

Different batches of cane vary slightly in color so order as much as you need for the job. If in doubt, measure the area to be covered and your cane supplier can estimate the amount required.

Begin by soaking several strands in a bucket of warm water (5-8 minutes) or enough to make the cane pliable. Soak additional cane before you need it. If a strand starts to dry as you are working it, use a wet sponge to keep it pliable. On a square piece, work from the top (or back) forward) down and insert the cane in the left-most rear hole allowing a 4" to 6" end to extend below the bottom. Hold with a dowel peg. Run the strand through the matching hole in the front and peg it. Bring the strand up through the next hole to the right and to the back and down through it's matching hole. The cane doesn't have to be pulled taut. Take up the slack but don't try to stretch the cane. As it dries, it becomes drum tight by itself. You don't need to peg each hole — only peg when you need to eliminate slack and only keep the pegs in the holes until the end can be tied off.



Don't allow the cane to twist on the top or bottom and keep the shiny side up. As the second and succeeding strands hold the first in place, you can eliminate the peg and use it at the end of a strand. If a strand beaks or you run out of a length, always insert a 4-6" end through the nearest hole and peg it.

When you have covered the seat from rear to front, peg the end and start the second course. Proceed from left to right and peg the first course and follow the procedure above. The third course starts at the left front and lay this course from to the right of the first course. The first three courses are layers
Continued on Page 3

COMING UP.....

December 9, Saturday — Christmas party and Show and Tell at Nemo Robinson's Shop

WOOD SERIES —Butternut: Walnut's kissing cousin

Most woodworkers have heard of costly black walnut, even if they might not have worked it. On the other hand, butternut—although a walnut, too—remains hardly recognized as quality stock.

Butternut has more renown as a nut producer than as a woodworking wood. Ever since the pioneer days, people have gathered its sweet, oily nuts with relish each fall. Early Americans also knew butternut as a dye. "Butternut jeans," homespun overalls dyed brown in the juice of butternut husks, were a common sight. And, like the hard maple, the tree was even tapped for its sweet sap, which was processed into syrup.

Historically, carvers have always made the most use of butternut as a highly desirable wood. Its straight grain and softness translate into easy carving. For that reason, many intricately carved church altars turn out to be butternut.

Butternut (*Juglans cinerea*), also known as white walnut and oil nut, grows in a northern range from southern New Brunswick in Canada to the North Carolina mountains and west to eastern Minnesota. The tree never appears in stands, but occurs sparsely in rich, moist bottom-land soils.



A medium-sized tree, butternut generally grows 30-50' in height and to a trunk diameter of 1-3'. But in prime forest conditions, it can reach 80-100' and diameters of 4'. For instance, the largest butternut on the National Register of Big Trees stands 88' tall.

At a distant glance, butternut resembles black walnut in shape, although it never grows as tall and tends to spread more. And the bark has a gray color instead of the dark brown of black walnut.

The alternate, frondlike leaves are 15-30" long and have as many as 17 pointed leaflets, that on the underside, are sticky to the touch. Butternut trees produce oblong nuts with thick, leathery husks and sweet, oily kernels that squirrels love. The nuts drop simultaneously with the leaves in the fall.

Butternut's coarse, straight grained wood features a light tan color and a beautiful luster. At 27 pounds per cubic foot air-dried, butternut weighs less than black walnut. It's also softer, less durable, and not as strong. In stability, the two are equal.

Butternut often becomes carved furniture and mantelpieces, as well as relief, figure, and sculptural carvings. Stained, it imitates walnut in furniture and paneling.

Where it's plentiful, the wood becomes cabinets, molding, boxes, and crates. Even wormy butternut, which turns up on occasion, may prove worthy for use in certain projects, such as relief carvings or boxes.

Because today few woodworkers other than carvers demand butternut, it may be difficult to obtain except at large

hardwood lumber dealers located within its range. But specialty suppliers catering to turners and carvers frequently offer butternut blanks.

Butternut wood sometimes turns out to be wormy, the work of powder-post beetles and their larvae. Such damaged wood can be used for attractive projects, as long as the varmints aren't still working! Kiln-drying usually solves any potential problems, and a thoroughly applied, tough finish guarantee's any survivors' demise, but it pays to closely observe all wormy wood for pests before buying.

Butternut works more easily than black walnut with hand and power tools because the wood ranks lower in all strength properties than its cousin. That's a plus, but also a caution. Butternut's softness makes it more susceptible to nicks and dents as you work the wood. Although black walnut dust can irritate the eyes, butternut doesn't have that tendency. But as with all woods, wear a dust mask when doing fine sanding.

The wood's coarse grain requires care when jointing or planing to avoid tearout. Make several shallow cuts to remove wood in stead of one deep one. Attach a backing board to the miter fence to act as a chip breaker when crosscutting. Butternut, due to its softness, shouldn't burn when routed, but shallow passes eliminate any possible tearout or chipping. You won't have any problem gluing butternut—its coarse texture draws in adhesives, ensuring a strong bond. Butternut accepts all types of stains (you can even stain it to pass for black walnut) without filling first. But the rich tan wood may look best with a more natural clear finish. Although oil finishes prove popular on butternut carvings, you can improve the wood's natural luster by first burnishing it.

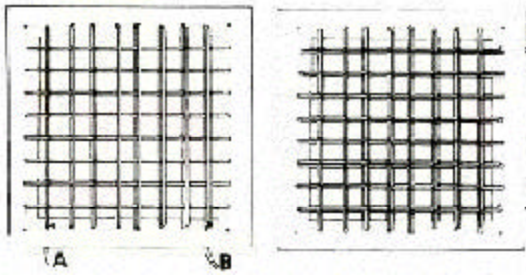
Butternut is a favorite of relief carvers because it takes fine details and finishes to a beautiful luster. But to avoid warp on large works, edge-join two or three pieces rather than use a single board. Also, keep these other tips in mind: In a relief carving, carve the sapwood side of the board to reduce any tendency for it to warp or cup. Look at the growth rings visible in the end to locate the sapwood side. The larger rings will be on what was the outside of the tree. Be cautious when taking deep cuts along the straight grain as the wood may pop or tear out.

Turning tricks: The coarse grain of butternut, and its softness, requires sharp tools. For best results, turn butternut at a lathe speed of 800-1,000 rpm.

For stability in use, always work wood with a maximum moisture content of 8 percent. Feed straight-grained wood into planer knives at no angle. To avoid tearing, feed wood with figured or twisted grain at a slight angle (about 15°), and take shallow cuts of about 1/32". For clean cuts, rip with a rip-profile blade that has 24-32 teeth. For crosscutting, use a blade with about 40 teeth. Avoid drilling with twist drills. They tend to wander and cause breakout. Use a backing board under the workpiece. Drill pilot holes for screws. Rout with sharp, preferably carbide-tipped, bits and take shallow passes to avoid burning. Carving a soft hardwood like butternut means fairly steep gouge bevels—greater than 20°.

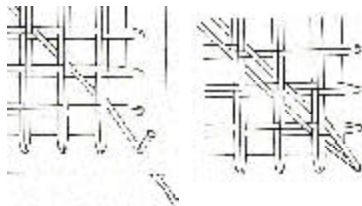
Able To Cane Continues...

The fourth course begins weaving from the right to the left below course two. This procedure allows loops on the bottom side to fill in between those made by previous courses.



Before removing a peg, turn the chair bottom side up. Using a wet sponge, soak the ends and adjacent loop until both ends are pliable.

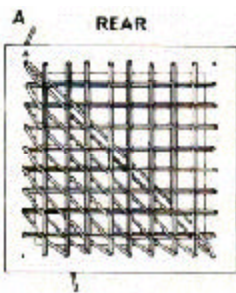
When the loop is pliable, slip the awl under the loop and raise it only as much as needed to slip and knot the end under the loop. You can wrap the end two or more times around the loop but use care so you don't break the loop. When the



lose end is secure, you can remove the peg. As the cane dries, it tightens but if you think the knot will slip, apply a dab of white glue (not TiteBond), to the knot.

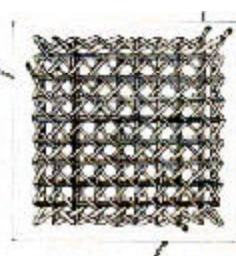
Before starting the fifth course, line up the already installed ones so they butt against each other, side by side. The fifth course is woven under verticle and over horizontal courses. Start at the left-hand rear corner and keep this course going in a straight line toward the front right-hand corner. If the holes in your job are so placed you can't go through a corner hole, go through the hole that maintains a straight diagonal weave.

Go through the hole, slip the end under the nearest loop and tie a knot. Go back through the same corner hole and weave back across the other courses as shown above.

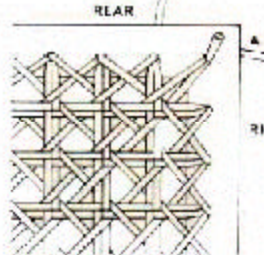


If keeping the diagonal straight requires going into a hole on the right side above corner hole, go through it. What you want to achieve is the pattern shown left. When you reach the upper left hole, peg it and continue weaving to achieve the results below left. After finishing one half of the

diagonal, do the other half starting in the first hole to the right of the far left rear hole.



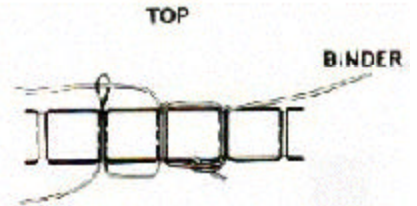
The final course starts at the rear right corner hole and works diagonally to the front left corner. This repeats the last course covering the lower half. On this course, go over the verticle course and under the horizontal courses. Be sure to soak the ends to make them pliable, then tie knots. Remove the pegs and now you are ready



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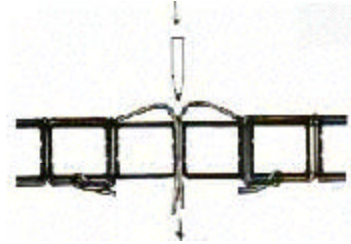
to apply the binder.

Soak the narrow binder, like the cane, to make it pliable. The binder should be slightly less than the width of the holes. You can trim the binder with a razor blade or sharp knife as needed. The binder is laid over the holes. A peice of cane is tied at the bottom. See the illustrations. Allow both ends of the binder to finish in one hole.



Drive a peg into this hole to hold the binder securely. Cut a peg to the exact size required so that when it is driven in, it finishes flush with the binder.

Small holes in some chairs coupled with over size cane may tend to fill the holes completely. In this case, use your awl to make room for the cain required to tie the binder. Use care not to cut or crack the cane or binder.



If your chair is of an irregular shape, always locate and start at the center. If you do a seat, start at the back and work toward the front, following the above procedures as closely as possible. Always keep your lines of cane equidistant, even if this means skipping a hole.

If the chair seat is round, use a ruler or carpenter's square to determine the center. In this case, always start at the center or as close as possible.

Always install strands of cane in parallel lines, even if you have to skip a hole or two along the way. Always keep the space between strands the same size and always check your work as you go along (un-weaving a long strand can be a real chore!). If you are in doubt about how it will look, take a ball of twine and run this into the holes to give yourself an idea of the finished appearance.

The McKinnon Bird's-eye Rocker was finished over the Thanksgiving holiday in 1983. Since that time, it has served as the seat I take each morning to put on my socks and shoes for the day. Before Carrie McKinnon Humphus passed away at the age of 97 years she told me that her grandmother's rocker had held so many children over the years that the right rocker was more worn than the left. When I asked her about this, she said the babies were always held on the right so the child could start feeding on the left!



Barry Humphus

Your Board of Directors trust that everyone in our Club had a great Thanksgiving and will have both a Merry Christmas and a fine New Year!