

BAY AREA WOODWORKERS ASSOCIATION

September 1987 - Vol. 6, Issue 9

Box 421195 San Francisco CA 94142

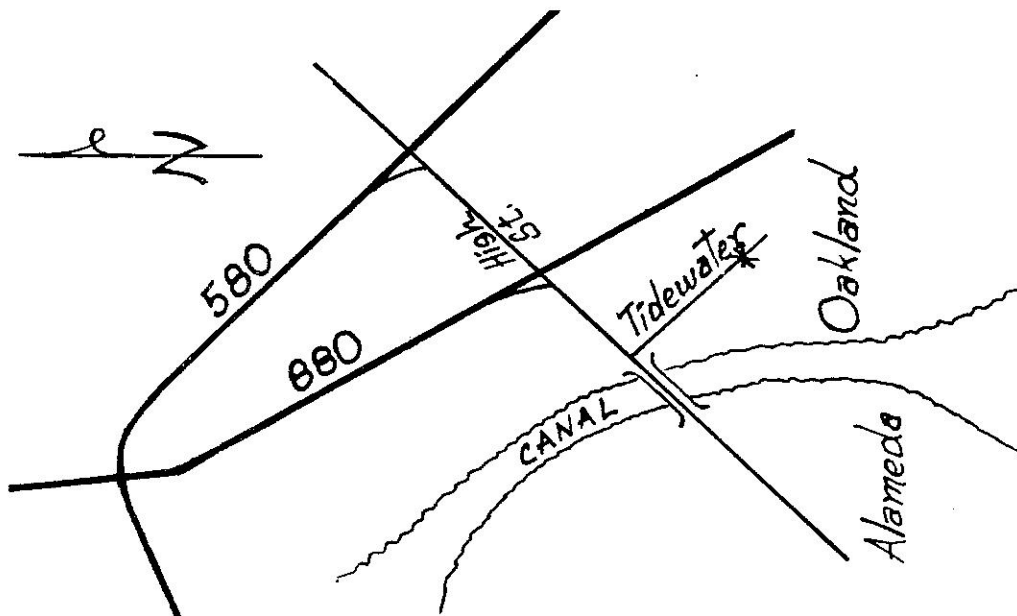
THIRD THURSDAY PREVIEW

The September 17th meeting will be held at White Brothers Lumber. This is a dinner meeting generously provided by White Brothers for BAWA. Please R.S.V.P. a week in advance so they will have an idea of quantities. Phone number to leave your response on = 537-4096 (Norma's business #). In addition to dinner, the meeting will include a tour of the mill, special sales on certain items will be available, and a discussion. Topics will include how they assemble an order, what's going on with veneers and moldings, and possible presentation by Don White of duck decoys. Also, Steve Savage's work will be on display as the sales counter and desk at White Brothers.

Meeting will start at 6:00 P.M.; please arrive as soon as possible. Tour of the mill before dinner. Dinner served at 7:30P.M.

Directions:

880 South to High Street Exit. Turn West onto High Street and follow till Tidewater Street. Turn Left on Tidewater (turn onto Tidewater before the bridge...if you go over the bridge, you went too far) and follow about mile. White Brothers Lumber located at 4801 Tidewater; on the right hand side. Phone # 261-1600.



HIGHLIGHTS FROM LAST MEETING

Ken Rose (of Rose/Carter, recently sold) told us about life after woodwork, "Enjoyment now, profit later?". Ken is now with Viking Dist., 17th & Mission in S.F. Viking's background is supplying contractors with tools, hardware, misc. Ken Rose adds the woodworking side.

New Products:

all plastic toggler with one size (5/16) pilot hole.

Tapon system = hammer drill with drill bit and sleeve. Drills and taps screws into mortar, tile, cement ...its easy! Larry Borsian should be collecting royalties for his endorsements and demos.

3-M has a new "F" weight sandpaper. This time "F" is for flexible.

Don Segale had new information on toxic waste as attention to disposal steps up. Sunset scavenger will pick up oil or water base sludge. (One month in the sun evaporates one gallon) Other wastes may require an approved carrier. "For as little as \$150/mth Safety Specialists, Inc. will pkg, label, manifest transport and dispose of your firm's hazardous waste." Maybe time for BAWA to organize 3 pickup points (S.F., E.Bay, S.Bay) available to anyone.

Bishop Gallery: short lived and already gone... How does S.F. support fine crafts?

Stan Noerner, Western Plywood (Harrison & 22nd in S.F.) gave us a good pitch for their stock which is largely domestic wood supplied by Fiberboard Corp, a subsidiary of Louisiana Pacific. L.P. makes their own solid and jointed core (no voids except on paint grade) and they cover with michigan or canadian veneers which are 1/32"thick versus 1/60 veneer on most imports. Their policy, guaranteed, they replace problem sheets.

MAIN EVENT: Mike Laine's slide show of his 7 weeks at Club Med Managua - also known as Apsniga = Architects and Planners in support of Nicaragua (contact person: Steve Kerpin, Topanga, Ca.) If you missed it, you blew it bad. Mike humorously related his world view and love of life which encompasses everything from kids to flowering tree, including people who read their constitution and grafitti saying, "Aqui Nabio Se Rinde" (translation = "Here no one surrenders")

Cynthia Huntington

NOTES FROM EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1) Discussion of current, new and potential advertisers took place. It was decided that the treasurer's will attempt to switch the advertizers onto a quarterly billing system to minimize paperwork. With the addition of new advertizers it is estimated that the newsletter is now paying for itself. Should the day ever come when revenues exceed cost, BAWA can contemplate what we want to do with the bonus.

2) Liability Insurance: Tim Kennedy and Ray Ruble are still looking into this matter of acquiring liability insurance for the organization. Terrie Noll volunteered to provide information concerning insurance available through the American Crafts Council.

3) Cal Oak Field Trip: please invite your friends to a guaranteed fun day! The more the merrier. Field trip needs 26 more people. Lunch will be barbeque chicken, potatoe salad (homemade by Don's wife) and watermellon.

4) Upcoming Meeting Schedule:

September = White Brothers dinner meeting (RSVP)

October = "Right To Know" discussion of toxins

November = European & American design (?) in Don Segale's shop

5) Special note: many thanks for all the time, energy and money Ray Ruble put into the new P.A. system. Certainly a big plus to the upcoming meetings!

6) Notice to General Membership: please pay up on your dues. When your money is due is indicated on the label of your newsletter. If you have any questions about this; please contact Steve Madden (#654-3332).



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CALENDAR

The work of BAWA members Don Dupont, Ed Gottesman and John and Carolyn Grew-Sheridan are featured in the fall issue of the quarterly publication, Better Homes and Gardens Decorating magazine. The article is entitled, "Art Furniture - Is It Art or Furniture?".

FROM THE EDITOR

Well, I don't know about you, but for me August seemed an awfully short month. Now its September, I am still behind for August and the newsletter goes to print come hell or high water. Leaves me speechless.

Kate Herald

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

It is the policy of BAWA to print all signed letters-to-the-editor. Because of limited space, please make every effort to keep the length of the letter within 1 page. Opinions expressed in each letter are those of the author. BAWA accepts no responsibility for the content of letters submitted. All letters must be typed and will be printed "as is" unless otherwise requested by the author. Please send letters to the BAWA post office box. Cut-off date for publication in current newsletter is the first Tuesday of every month. Please note; any letter considered by the newsletter staff to be "unfit to print" will be read at the general meeting (preferably by the author) and voted on by the general membership.

P.S.: keep those cards and letters coming!

Dear Friends;

Below is a short to the Editor. Thanks for your help in trying to fairly resolve and conclude the SM/G-S debate.



Juried Out Or Juried In?

Since unsubstantiated personal arguments aren't supposed to be a part of the give and take of BAWA discourse let me correct something that Ray Ruble said. He stated in the August newsletter that I have a "personal argument" with Sam Maloof because Maloof supposedly once rejected my work from a show. This is a serious charge.

If Ruble had had the courtesy to check first with me he would have found out that the truth is that once Maloof juried Grew-Sheridan work into the national competition, American Contemporary Works in Wood, an exhibit that we have been chosen for for three consecutive years. Not bad for the designs and craftsmanship of a couple of "soap salesmen," as Ruble called us.

John Grew-Sheridan

My thanks to the newsletter staff for reproducing most of a brochure that presents information about a medical-aid project for which I am director. I want to make clear, however, that I did not ask for space from the newsletter staff. I am sorry that important pieces from other members were not printed in the *July* issue, and I am glad that they will be printed now. My best wishes to the new staff in their desire to respond to members' interests. I agree with the overwhelming sense of the membership that suppression of material is disastrous. The rest is just fun.

Bob Greenberg

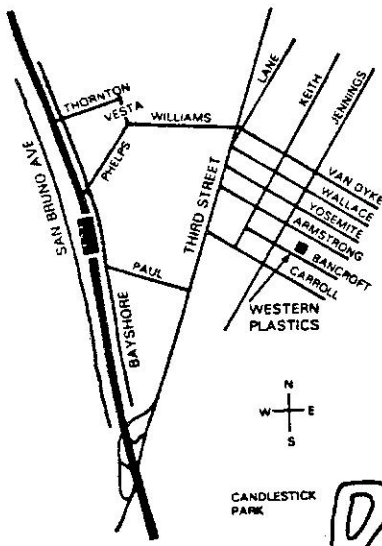
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EDITOR'S NOTE: Don't be apologetic, Bob. We printed it because it was worthy.



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Safety Tips For Shop Vacs

The original problem was dirt, or rather the removal of it from under some grass matting in my home. Taking a typical woodworker's approach, I decided that what I needed was power and, turning to the GRAINGER catalogue in my shop, I picked out a shiney little robot-shaped machine named Dayton. I figured that anything that drew fourteen amps had to be the TURBO-SPORT of vacuum cleaners and certainly up to grassmatting, tinsel, and other minor household chores.

What I failed to realize was that the manufacturer had not sent along any warning literature to tell me that this device was one powerful sucker and should be watched closely at all times. It was not until I turned it on in my kitchen that I began to get the message. Dayton immediately turned over a bowl of dry cat food and every last Friskie was devoured in an instant. The cats were really shook and I realized that we had unwittingly brought into our home a character not to be trusted. We're talking industrial strength pressure gradients here! I mean this guy is quick! One pass through an average sized room and emptying the can^{ister} becomes like autopsying a shark; clothing, lost objects, and small pieces of stuff previously thought to be integral parts of the room.

The grass mat was cleaned without incident but several days later Dayton once again showed a tendency toward

unexpected and almost unpreventable gulping. He snatched a twelve inch square of linoleum tile from the kitchen floor. I probably would have glued it back in place if, in that same instant, he hadn't grabbed the one next to it and swallowed them both in bite-sized pieces. It became clear that the new-kitchen-floor project had just begun.

We now have a handsome vertical-grained fir floor in our kitchen. It looks good, cleans easily, and, best of all, is Dayton proof. We have pretty much made our peace with the machine but only extreme diligence has prevented it from making further decisions for us concerning when and how we wish to spend our discretionary income.

There won't be another vacuum machine in our house for many years. Dayton comes with a multi-year warranty and finding an excuse to get rid of him will not be easy; also he seems capable of doing any sucking job we can come up with so I guess he's here to stay.

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COMPANY

WOODWORKING: SURVIVAL IN A CHANGING WORLD

by Peter Good

Woodworking is a craft born in the earliest human times out of necessity and opportunism. People needed shelter, tools and weapons, and trees were available and could be fashioned into the necessities. With many modifications and refinements, the craft has endured to the present and will undoubtedly continue into the future. But in what form, by who and to what extent?

We all know that prior to industrial times, woodworking enjoyed great importance in construction, boat building, furniture making and the production of countless other items. In recent times, however, wood has given way in many applications to metal, plastics and other synthetics. Woodworking began to slip in importance as other materials were developed which offered superior performance or lower cost or both. If you can't beat the competition, or at least keep up with it, the best hope for survival is to be different. Perhaps in response to this, woodworking is now in the throes of change and specialization.

Hello, Modern Times, where to make it in woodworking you have to be at least one of the following: Very good, very cheap, very fast, very individual or a very sharp promoter. Although wood is often described with words such as "pretty", "warm", "friendly", "natural" and "real", it is nevertheless thought of by many people as a troublesome material; it is dimensionally unstable, it has to be maintained, it cracks, it rots, it discolors and it dents. How much more desirable, they reason, anodized aluminum windows are than wood. And just think of how much more practical plastic and metal furniture is. And just look at our gleaming new vinyl floor, so in keeping with today's easy living. Wood is so.....so old fashioned, so imperfect, so irregular, so.....crude. Why, it's not even a manufactured product, not even refined. All the wood craftsperson does (some say) is take a "found" material, cut it up and stick it back together in a different shape. And you call this art? You call this craft? It sounds more like the after lunch activity hour in elementary school! Well, Mr. or Ms. woodworker, seems like your prices are mighty high for something that falls somewhere between forth grade activity period and neanderthal necessity!

Maybe I'm exaggerating, maybe not. The fact remains that the buying public is often willing to pay more for an aluminum window, a glass table or a plastic clarinet than the equivalent articles made out of wood. Wood appears to be losing ground in favor of the real or perceived advantages of other materials, even though those perceptions may be based largely on advertising claims. I suggest that one possible solution to this dilemma lies in reeducating the public concerning the positive qualities of wood. It is a flexible material that can adjust to a wide range of climatic conditions, can endure for countless generations, will enrich with age, can easily be altered at a later time, will accept numerous types of finishes and color treatments, has endless diversity and a captivating beauty matched by no manufactured material. Another suggestion is to increase the price of articles made of wood to reflect the fact that this material was obtained under difficult conditions, was laboriously milled, was patiently dried, was carefully selected, was transported at considerable cost and effort, was meticulously prepared, was precisely assembled, was finished with great skill and, all in all, ate up a large chunk of time out of the lives of quite a few highly experienced and talented people and all during that time it occupied a substantial area of valuable real estate or floor space without paying rent. Trouble is, woodworkers are an independent lot and some of them won't go along with this. Some woodworkers will do anything for a buck and will bid as low as they have to to get the job. In their struggle for survival, they wipe out all of the realities involved in transforming a seed to a tree to a piece of fine furniture. They can't see past putting food on the table tonight and keeping the bill collector away from the door. So they charge low prices or do low quality work and the cycle becomes self-perpetuating. Maybe there should be a law requiring that a person have at least a years' living expenses deposited in the bank before they can get a license to do woodworking. Maybe an apprenticeship should be required to prevent the formation of bad business habits and poor quality techniques.

What it boils down to is that the buying public has developed a certain disrespect for wood and some erroneous notions about the worth of those who work with it. As woodworkers, too many of us have encouraged these views by shoddy workmanship and unrealistically low prices. It's up to us to get our

own acts together and also to police our own ranks. If each of us did only the type of woodworking that we do well and sold our work at prices that accurately reflect the true value of the material and the practitioner's time, we'd all be better off. If we all work to increase the public's respect for skilled woodworking, our tomorrows would be a lot more secure. If woodworking slips into obscurity or disfavor or becomes known as just another kind of manual labor performed by people who aren't trained for anything better, it will be because we let it. Be aware that we also have the choice to affect a renaissance and new attitudes toward woodworking. With some effort, our art and craft can enjoy renewed status, higher levels of quality and more rewarding profits.

We're more than friends to woodworkers and cabinetmakers in the Bay Area...

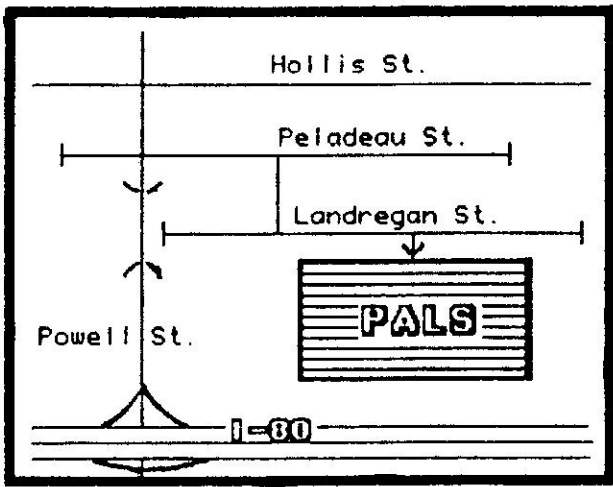
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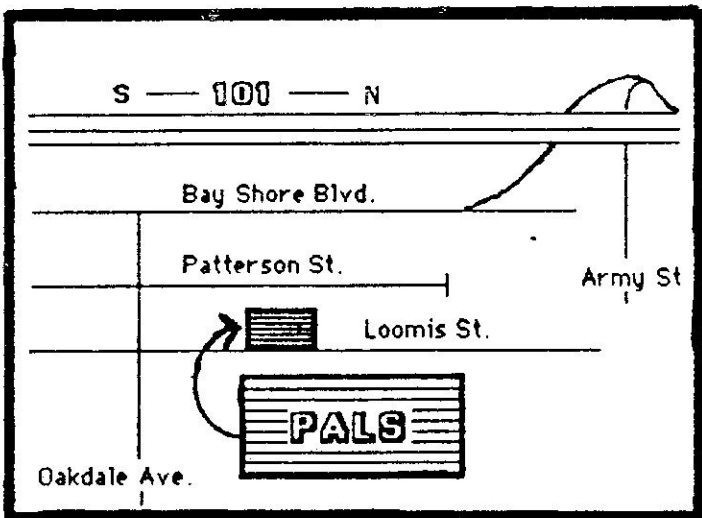
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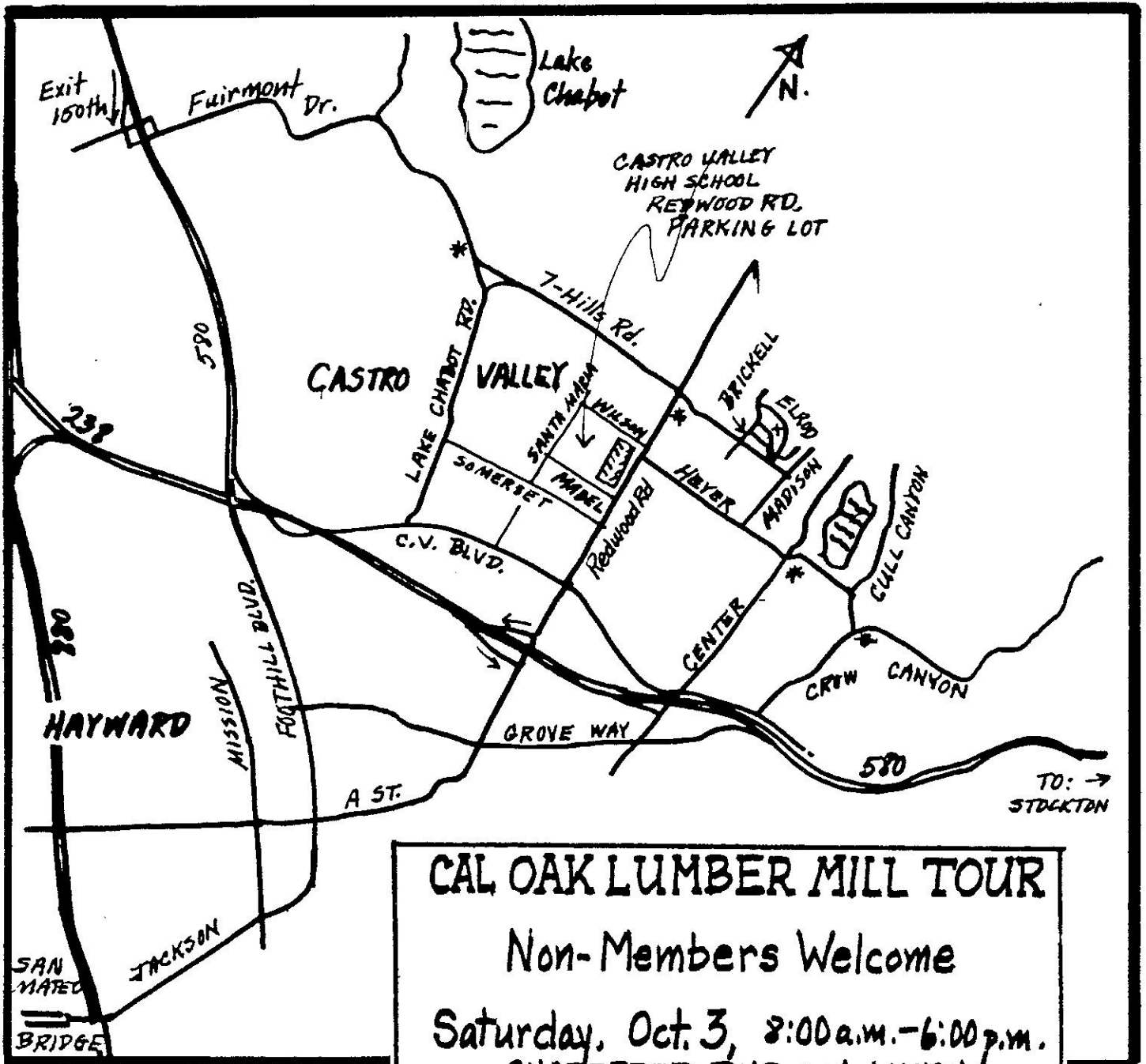
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Wood Works

A place where kids can pound out their problems

BY ANGIE CANNON

At age 6, Saverio Williams was a terror. He punched other kids. He sassed teachers. He was suspended from school often.

Today, 10-year-old Saverio is an angel. He doesn't fight anymore. He hasn't been suspended in years.

"He's a completely different child," says his delighted mother, Deborah Williams of Oakland.

The secret? A hammer, some nails and a teacher who lets kids pound away.

In a Berkeley workshop sprinkled with sawdust, Al Mayberry runs a program called Kids' Carpentry, where children ages 5 to 12 build sophisticated skateboards, go-carts, bookshelves, doll beds, bird feeders, sailboats and power boats.

Many of the kids have been kicked out of schools and day-care centers. Some are thieves. Some are fighters. They've been told over and over that they are failures.

"We're talking about 7-year-old kids who've never had a normal day of school," says Mayberry, 39, a kid at heart who sometimes hops a hot-pink skateboard to work. "These kids are usually in a corner or a hall in trouble."

Somehow, in the process of sawing and sanding a piece of plywood into a boat, these children learn to like themselves.

The kids become motivated, Mayberry says, because they love what they're doing.

"Carpentry just brings them alive," says Mayberry. "For some, it's the first time they've ever succeeded at anything."

About 8,000 kids — not all of them troubled — have gone through the program since it began six years ago. Mayberry has 10 teachers who offer the carpentry program at eight recreation centers and schools in Berkeley, Oakland and San Francisco. He would like to expand to other schools this fall. He also runs \$38 two-week summer sessions at his Kids Headquarters workshop at the John

Muir School in Berkeley.

Parents rave about the carpentry class. Psychologists recommend it. Kids love it.

"I like making these things 'cuz you know you put some effort into it," says Justin Boley, 8, of Piedmont.

"It's something you don't get to do very often at home, and it's fun," says Samora (Crunch) Mahoney, 7, of Oakland.

Cajan Horowitz, a Mill Valley mother, is ecstatic: "This is just great. It's therapeutic. It's creative. It builds self-esteem."

Last year as an experiment Mayberry worked with a fifth-grade class of disruptive "wild monkeys" who were failing their classes. Some were suicidal.

"In school, these kids constantly whine, interrupt and cry," he said. "But in carpentry, they were completely happy, enthusiastic and polite. It was amazing."

Carpentry also soothes creative, hyperactive kids such as 10-year-old Josh Garrett who rebel against school's rigid structure.

"He's a good kid, but he's real high-energy," says his mother, Nikki Garrett of Oakland. "A lot of people can't deal with him. They can't keep him interested. So he gets in trouble a lot."

Carpentry has transformed him, she says. This is Josh's second year and he goes almost every day. He's built a nightstand, a skateboard and has plans for a scooter and skateboard ramp.

"He is so intrigued by the work he's doing," Garrett says. "It has given him so much self-esteem. He still gets into trouble, but not as much anymore."

Steve Loewinsohn, 8, is a bright, articulate boy who likes to write imaginative stories. But he was the kind of kid who would kick strangers in the shins. School was a prison to him.

"Steve was a handful," says his father, Ron Loewinsohn, a University of California English professor.

After building a skateboard that looks store-bought, Steve today is a happy child who gets along with others. "He's totally changed," his dad says.

Mayberry sympathizes with kids' anxieties about school.

Mayberry 'Hated School'

"I hated school my whole life," he says. "I thought the textbooks were so boring. I was a clock-watcher. Everyday, please, please 3 o'clock."

Mayberry thought he would reform the education system by becoming a teacher. In the early 1970s, he was a student teacher at an inner-city Milwaukee school but quit in frustration.

"I couldn't stand it," he says. "It was constant discipline all day long. Sit down. Shut up. Put that gum away."

Mayberry, who never completed his college degree, took up building wooden sailboats, working with 80-year-old German boat builders in Wisconsin. He was so fascinated by hand tools that he thought kids might love them too. He consulted educators, and no one had heard of wood-working for young children.

Mayberry moved to Berkeley, where he thought such an idea would be readily accepted. He received \$200 from the Berkeley Unified School District for a pilot program at the John Muir School. When the money ran out, the PTA put up the cash.

Learning by Doing

"It's a kind of learning that's very, very satisfying to kids," says Bruce Knee, an assistant headmaster at Town School in Pacific Heights. "It's not like they have to take a test. They can see the day-to-day progress. They are learning by doing."

Much of the success, educators and parents say, can be attributed to Mayberry's respect for children.

"I have never heard him talk in an abrasive, harsh manner with these kids," says parent Deborah Williams.

In calm, rational tones, Mayberry tells kids the rules: Anyone who acts up will be asked to leave. Anyone who runs around the room with a tool will be asked to leave.

No one wants to leave, he says.

"The kids want to do carpentry," Mayberry says. "I don't have to yell. They learn to control their own behavior. The school system doesn't have that."

Ebony: dark wood of kings, fruit of the gods.

By Jo-Ann Kaiser

Diospyros, the genus designation for some 300 species of trees and shrubs known as ebony, is Greek for "fruit of the gods." Kings of India used this dark-colored, highly valued wood to make scepters. Their drinking cups were also made of ebony, as it was believed to be an antidote for poison.

Richard K. Stem, president of Chester B. Stem Inc. of New Albany, Ind., a manufacturer and importer of sliced wood and lumber, said that there are two basic types of ebony: Macassar and Gaboon.

Macassar ebony has its origin in the Celebes Islands in the South Pacific. "The word Macassar is used because that is the largest city," he said. "It is distinctive in that it is not coal black in color; it always has some lighter shades of gray and even tan intermingled with the black. Sometimes it has so much of the lighter color that it looks like marble."

"Today ebony is being extracted from more difficult terrain by helicopter," Stem said, adding that Macassar ebony is used largely in architectural installations. It is rarely used in furniture, and usually only as a trim.

The other well-known ebony, Gaboon ebony, comes from West Africa. "It is coal black and very hard," said Stem. "The sizes are very small and generally used to make musical instruments. At one time, ebony was used to make the black keys of a piano," he said.

Ebony grows throughout the world in tropical and temperate climates, specifically in the Philippines, East Indies, India, Sri Lanka, Madagascar, Africa, and North and South America.

The general opinion is that the most commercially valuable ebony is Diospyros ebenum or Macassar ebony, which is native to Sri Lanka (formerly Ceylon, which accounts for it sometimes being called Ceylonese ebony), Southern India, and Malaysia. Mauritius ebony (*D. reticulata*) is another commercially valuable species found in Mauritius.

The best of the species is extremely hard and heavy with a fine grain. Fine ebony is most often jet black, but wood with brown, red or yellow stripes and mottling is popular as well.

Scientists believe that ebony gets its

deep black color from deposits of tannins, as well as from other by-products of the trunk. Only the heartwood is dark. Ebony's sapwood ranges from white to grayish white to pinkish white. A hard gum fills the heartwood fibers so it is brittle and easy to work and carve.

Ebony, in addition to its furniture, architectural and small component uses, is a popular choice for carving, said Tom Quirk, consultant and wood specialist with the Forest Products Laboratory. According to Quirk, Ceylonese was the original ebony of commerce with the African ebones coming into the market later.

Today the bulk comes from Africa and Southeast Asia, including a few species that are not true ebony, but are marketed as such. These include wood from the Byra and Berlinia genres.

Persimmon, which is often called the American ebony, is from the genus Diospyros. And while it grows plentifully in the southern part of the United States, Quirk says usable heartwood is harder to find.

Stem said that the persimmon in America often has little black spots in it — "just coal black against the light persimmon color. If a log has any size to it, then the heart has turned black with some light mixed in with it," Stem explained. "Persimmon veneer is used in furniture from time to time and has a very handsome grain; sometimes it is even cross figured. And, of course, it is extremely durable, which is a nice advantage in furniture."

Persimmon, said Stem, is also famous for its use in wooden golf club heads because of its great impact resistance.

Common persimmon or Diospyros virginiana (fruit of the gods from Virginia) is the largest of the ebony family and the only commercially important one native to the United States. There is, however, a Texas persimmon, *Diospyros texana*, also called capote or black persimmon, which yields wood that is considerably less strong than *D. virginiana*.

Larry Frye, president and executive director of Fine Hardwoods American Walnut Assn., said that the name probably is derived from its geographic location in the "new world," which was originally named after Queen Elizabeth, who was also known as the Virgin Queen.

But while its fruit can be delicious, Frye cautioned that the persimmon plum be ripe before eating it. "Anyone wishing to taste the tree's fruit for the first time should not be impetuous. The oldest known words of caution come from Captain John Smith: 'If it be not ripe, it will draw a man's mouth awry with much torment.'" Frye said a green plum leaves an awful, sour taste in a

person's mouth for up to 24 hours. Edible fruit is wrinkled and orange when ripe.

Persimmon is a slow-growing tree found from the Atlantic seaboard to southeastern Iowa. In its northern locales it is mostly shrub-like, but in the warmer areas it can grow as tall as 50 to 60 feet, and in some instances over 100 feet tall.

Persimmon goes by many names in this country including: simmon, bara-bara, boawood, butterwood, cyril date plum and possumwood. It is an extremely hard wood that is dense, strong and heavy, weighing from 53 to 59 pounds per cubic foot. Persimmon will shrink during drying and will crack unless properly treated.

Persimmon has high shock resistance properties and holds nails well but it is hard to glue. It is commonly used for architectural interiors, wall paneling, furniture, tool handles, knife handles, boxes and crates.

While persimmon is not overly resistant to decay, it had no serious insect or fungus problems until recently when persimmon wilt developed. This fungus has reduced the persimmon supply.

Persimmon's heartwood is black, brown or variegated. Not much of the sapwood turns to heartwood until the tree ages. Aging can take 100 years or more. Persimmon sapwood is white when it is freshly cut, but can change to a light brown or yellow-brown color and can be figured with dark spots or dark stripes giving it an interesting pattern when cut.

Frye said the persimmon lumber and veneer are somewhat limited in supply and carry a medium to high price tag. Ebony worldwide is increasingly scarce and carries a high price when available.

Today there are few pieces of solid ebony furniture produced, although antiques will sometimes feature solid pieces. Now one might see a drawer front of ebony, but more likely it will be used as inlay or trim.

Quirk said the substitution of like woods for others probably dates back to the days of mahogany trading when that wood was scarce. "It really is a matter of 'buyer beware,'" he said. According to Quirk, people often don't mind receiving a substitute unless there is a performance problem. With the so-called Philippine mahoganies one could actually be buying red or white lauau, some having good reputations and others not.

The best ebones are hard, dense and heavy, Quirk said, which is a performance plus but can make them hard to work with because they dull tools. The oils in the dust during sanding can be irritating to some workers. The residue in the cells of ebony make it somewhat oily, but easy to finish with a great sheen when polished. ■

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BAWA DATA

The Bay Area Woodworkers' Association is an organization of woodworkers who have banded together to promote woodworking in both technical and aesthetic directions. This newsletter is a monthly publication intended to serve as a communications vehicle and a source directory for the membership of this Association.

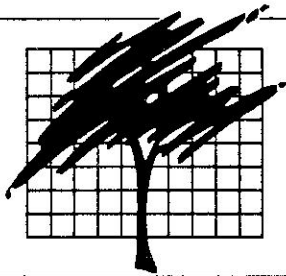
Membership dues are \$30/year, for which any member may participate fully in the Association, in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the By-Laws. This includes voting power on any issue brought before the membership for a vote, notification of the monthly shop talks and demonstrations put on by the Association, receipt of this newsletter each month, and privilege of participation in any special discount programs sponsored by local businesses in conjunction with this Association.

Checks for membership dues may be made out to the Bay Area Woodworkers' Association and sent to P.O. Box 421195, San Francisco, CA 94142. Membership cards will be issued to all members in good standing.

Copies of the By-Laws are available at all monthly meetings, or can be requested by mail.

The monthly shop talks and demonstrations are held on the third Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m., at a location announced both in the newsletter and at the previous meeting.

The monthly executive committee meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of every month, and are open to any interested members. To arrange attendance, contact any member of the executive committee by telephone or the address given above.



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