

Woodworkers Club of Houston

September 2004 • Volume 20, No. 9 • www.wwch.org

August Program: How to Make A Windsor Chair

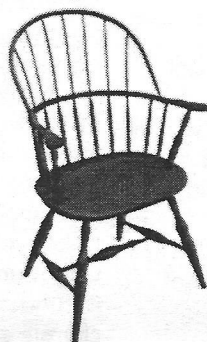
Windsors first appeared in King George's England just under 300 years ago. It wasn't long before the design migrated to the American colonies. English chairmakers were required to adhere to the many guilds which set standards and style requirements for all chairs made at the time. Soon after their arrival in the new world, colonial chairmakers along with other colonists took every opportunity to rebel against the King in every way possible. Almost immediately, the restricted English style of Windsors started to take on the many changes that are now referred to as The American Windsors.

Although the first windsors were actually intended for garden use, hence the appearance of the original windsor green color, their colors became as varied as their style once the colonial chairmakers exercised their freedom from guilds and restrictions. The American style of Windsors became quintessentially American—it became the democratic chair—at home in the kitchen, living room, a farmhouse, or a courthouse. They were relatively inexpensive and easy to make as well as lightweight and very comfortable.

Any American Windsor chair that is hand made with authentic hand tools of the 17th and 18th century are a continuation of the American Windsor evolution. You will enjoy them now and your heirs will also in the centuries to come.

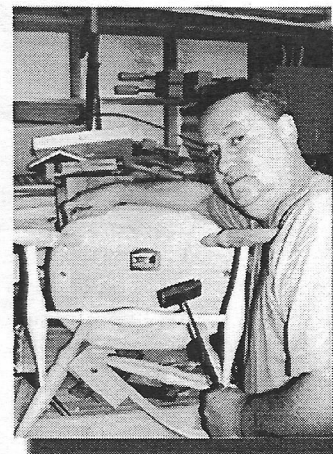
I give each chair the full attention they require to be called a handmade historically accurate reproduction. It all starts with using the right woods and preparing them correctly. Each chair is made one at a time and not on a production basis. I use mostly the replica hand

tools of the period (17th and 18th century) with some machine tools as with all my leg turnings.



I use the historically accurate species of woods used hundreds of years ago and use the same joinery used back then as well. The methods of crafting each chair is done without nails, screws, tacks, brads or other securing devices. Only glue is applied to the through sockets and then wedged and only glue to the blind sockets as those used in the seat. The spindles are faceted before they are driven into the blind sockets of the seats insuring that even if the glue fails the socket joinery will remain.

Windsor chairs withstand the test of time in style and construction techniques. Unfortunately, the craft, hand tools and skills to use them are disappearing with time. Len Fleury is a part of the revival that began 30 years ago in the northeast. He is also a recognized Master Windsor Chairmaker and one of the few with this speciality in Texas. Len currently works out of his workshop in Chapple Hill, Texas. In addition to building a variety of Windsor chair styles he sells his chairs at Barbara Tague's Red Awning Antiques in Tomball. More information can be found on his web site at www.windsorchairsoftexas.com.



Ecological restrictions on South American mahogany force buyers to look to Africa.

Mahogany dealers in the U.S. have had some difficulty in obtaining genuine mahogany (*Swietenia macrophylla*) for their customers. Trade in genuine mahogany has been restricted since it was listed on Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora in 2003. Dealers have discovered a viable alternative from Africa (*Khaya ivorensis*).

Although there are several species growing in West Africa the *Khaya ivorensis* is the specie exported. The trees grow to a height of 150' with diameters to 6'. Most of the trees are harvested in Ghana, Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, Ivory Coast and the Central African Republic.

"It's a genuine mahogany substitute," says Neil Gager, a retailer with Exotic Lumber Inc. in Gaithersburg, MD. "It's a medium-brown wood with a little bit of red, quite often with a little more red than the Honduran or South American mahogany. And at times it has more wavy grain than the South American species."

"Fifty years ago, mahogany in the United States was one-third African mahogany and two-thirds Swietenia, and gradually over the years, African mahogany disappeared from the market as more South American mahogany became available from places like Bolivia and Brazil," said Donald Thompson, president of Thompson Mahogany Co. in Philadelphia. "And now that there is less mahogany available in South America, the market is reverting back to to where it was 50 years ago."

African mahogany is used for fine furniture, cabinetry, large millwork jobs, paneling, boatbuilding, veneer—nearly all the applications where South American mahogany has been used over the years. African mahogany is available in lengths up to 16" and widths of 24" and thicknesses up to 16/4.

"The biggest plus for African mahogany is the fact that it is considered to be a genuine mahogany in the United States," Thompson said. "African mahogany has been promoted in the United States for well over 100 years as mahogany. They didn't even know that African mahogany and South American mahogany were different species until the late 1800s. They thought it was the same tree growing on both sides of the Atlantic."

The White ash paradox: demand is up but prices haven't risen. Yet.

Whether the problem is abundant supply, poor marketing or something else the bottom line is that ash doesn't excite many buyers except in the furniture manufacturing business. White ash grows in the eastern United States. Trees reach from 80' to 100' in height with trunk diameters up to 4'. The wood is strong and straight-grained with a brown to dark brown heartwood with a nearly white sapwood. White ash (*Fraxinus americana*), also known as American ash, is the most common and most commercially valuable of the 18 ashes in the U.S.

Ash is used for furniture, cabinetry, flooring, doors, architectural millwork, molding, tool handles, baseball bats, hockey sticks, oars, turnings and is sliced into veneer. It is also popular for food containers because it has no taste.

Ash is an excellent steam-bending wood and can be worked satisfactorily by hand and machine. It is fine for nailing, screwing and gluing, can be stained to a very good finish and it dries fairly easily with little movement.

"We're still moving ash, we're still promoting it," said Chip Cummings of the Wood Store in Troy, PA. "But it's undervalued and I don't think that is going to change anytime soon. It's kind of the Charley Brown of the wood world. It's good stuff but it just doesn't get the credit it deserves."

Lyptus, a new hybrid, is introduced to the U.S. market.

Grown on plantations in South America, Lyptus is developed by Aracruz Wood Products of Bahia, Brazil and distributed in North America by Weyerhaeuser. Lyptus is the trademarked name for a hybrid of two eucalyptus species, *Eucalyptus grandis* and *Eucalyptus urophylla*. Weyerhaeuser's product literature states that the naturally occurring hybrid of the two species was chosen "for the qualities of extremely fast growth and the ability to add clear, incremental and dense hardwood." The trees mature in 14 to 18 years and the second growth sprouts from the stump where the first growth was cut.

End uses include furniture, cabinetry, and architectural millwork. While some compare Lyptus to cherry in looks and hickory in density, others say it makes a good replacement for mahogany, jojoba and cherry.

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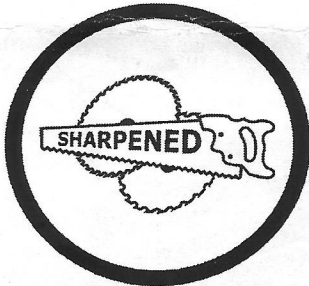
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10 Tips for Cutting Plywood

1. **Avoid Cross Cutting** – Plywood tends to chip the most when cut across its width (grain). Cutting along the length of the wood will help to reduce chipping.
2. **Use the Right Blade** – Special blades are manufactured for different cutting jobs. The number of teeth, width, angle, and rake of the blade all impact the cut. Choose a blade that best matches your specific cutting situation.
3. **Circular Saw** – cut with the “best face” down.
4. **Table Saw** – cut with the “best face” up.
5. **Score the Cut First** – Run the plywood through the saw removing only a minimal amount of wood. The next cut will leave a cleaner cut.
6. **Masking Tape** – Put masking tape over the cut line to help keep the fibers on the edge from pulling up.
7. **Backing Panel** – Attach a backing panel with strong double stick tape. The backer board will take the brunt of the damage.
8. **Use a Router** – A router fitted with a straight bit will cut a clean line. A pilot bit and straight edge will help provide a clean line.
9. **Score with a Utility Knife** – Score the cut line with a utility knife.
10. **Buy a Panel Scoring Setup** – Some saws can be fitted with a plywood panel scoring setup and are ideal if you have to cut a lot of plywood. The setup consists of a smaller blade that scores the surface of the plywood before it reaches the cutter.

Doweling Tip

Have you ever had trouble driving a dowel into its hole? This tip will help you drive in a dowel without any problems. Quite often air and glue inside the hole can prevent the dowel from sliding in easily. To prevent this resistance you can cut a slit into the side of the dowel. This will give the air and glue a channel to escape the hole.

Use a bandsaw to cut the groove vertically in the dowel. For safety, be sure to use a clamp to hold the dowel when you cut the groove.

Woodworking Shop Safety

10 Safety Tips to Post in Your Shop

1. **Think Before You Cut** – The most powerful tool in your shop is your brain, use it. Thinking your cuts and movements through before acting can help save both fingers and scrapwood.

2. **Keep a Clean Shop** – A cluttered shop is an accident waiting to happen. Keeping your shop clean will help protect you, and your tools, from tripping hazards.
3. **Avoid Distractions** – Pay attention to your actions. Looking up to watch the shop TV or visitor can result in your hand contacting the blade. Always wait until you have completed your cut before you take your eyes off the blade.
4. **Don't Rush** – Keep in mind that this is just a hobby and take a break when you feel rushed or frustrated with a project. Mistakes happen when we rush to complete a job.
5. **Don't Force It** – If your saw is resisting the cut, stop and see what's wrong. A misaligned rip fence or improperly seated throat plate can sometimes cause a board to get stuck in mid cut. Forcing the board in these situations may cause kickback or contact with the blade. Take a moment to evaluate the situation and determine the problem.
6. **Protect Yourself** – Wearing the proper shop protection is an important part of safe tool operation. Goggles, Ear Protection, and Lung Protection should be used when operating tools. Use push sticks when working close to the blade and make sure the tool's safety features are in place.
7. **Let the Tool Stop** – Giving the power tool time to wind down after a cut is an often-overlooked safety mistake. Even without power, the spinning blade can still do a lot of damage.
8. **Fumes and Dust** – Solvent fumes and airborne dust can present health and explosion hazards. Care should be taken to ensure a supply of fresh air and use only explosion proof vent fans.
9. **Wear Appropriate Clothing** – Loose clothing or hair can get caught in power tools and cause severe injury.
10. **No Alcohol** – Too many woodworkers have been injured because Alcohol clouded their judgment. Avoid their mistakes and wait until after you're done in the shop.

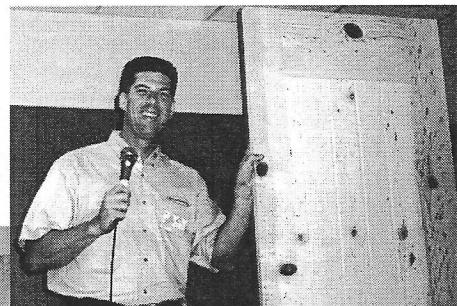
Attaching Scroll Saw Patterns

The next time you're working with a scroll saw reach for the carpet tape. Ordinary carpet tape is one of the best ways to attach a pattern to your workpiece. Unlike spray adhesives, or the hot iron method, there is no mess to cleanup after the cutting has been completed. The carpet tape will peel away without leaving any residue.

August projects

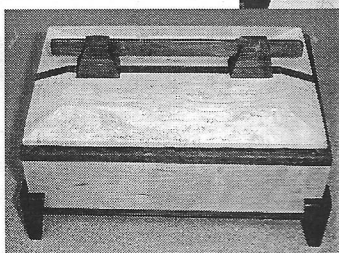
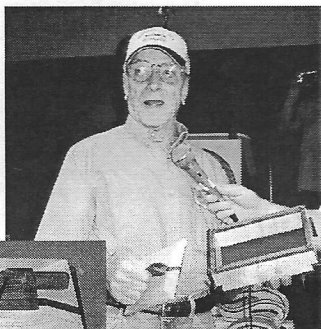


Lowell Holmes described how he handcarved his rocker made of mesquite in 120 hours during a class in Waco, Texas.

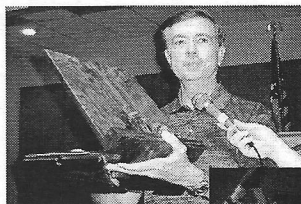
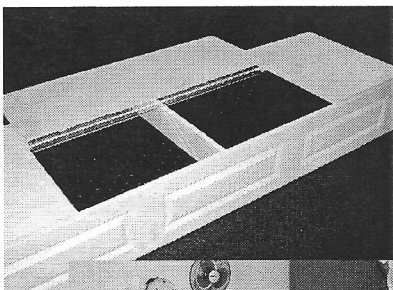
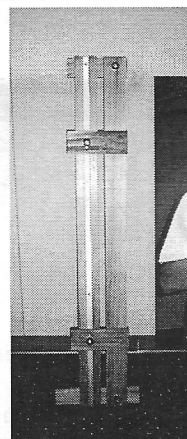


Todd Burchs did not offer his work as a "door" prize but explained how he made it. It is made of birds eye 3/4 pine. It is the door to the bath room in his garage. It will be finished with amber shellac.

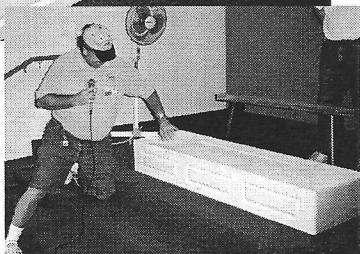
Bill Cole proudly showed off his keepsake chest made of bubinga and birds eye maple finished with wipe-on polyurethane.



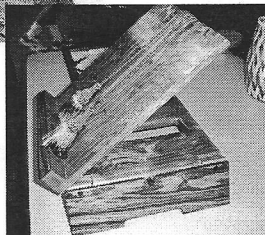
Jack Hutchison demonstrated how he uses his dado jig made of tropical hardwood. The stops are adjustable.



Arthur Thomas holds his bookstand made of coco bolo. It is portable, disassembles easily and folds up to hang on a wall. It can be set up on the reader's lap or on a table top.

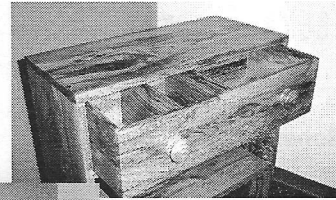
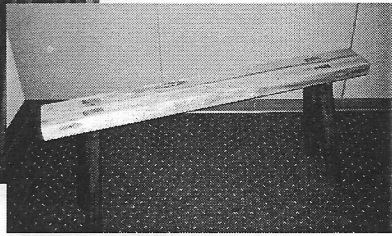


Denis Muras opens the lid to a window box of white pine. He admits it needs painting.

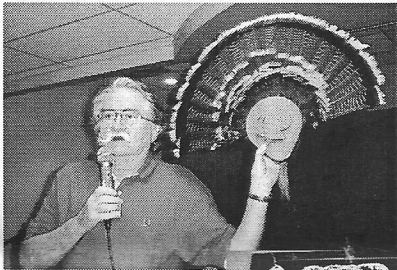
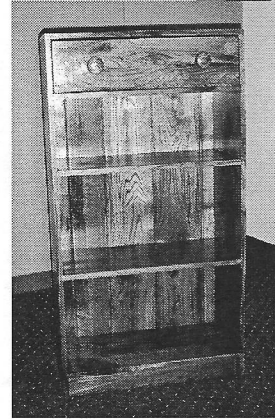




Dottie Forbes points out features of her Asian bench made of recycled wood from Brazil. It is constructed of floating splines and finished with polyurethane spar varnish.

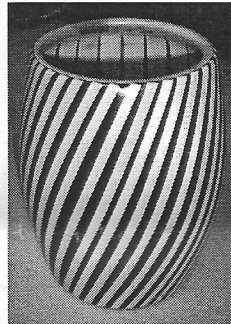
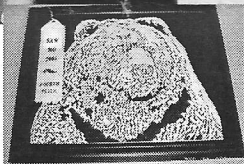


Ridg Gilmer (photo not available) shows his bookshelf of blackjack oak. The back panel is solid wood not plywood. It is finished with dark walnut. Wrought iron nails hold it together.

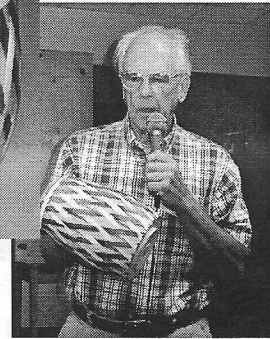


Norm Nichols shows off his red oak turkey mount and his baltic birch scroll sawed bear head.

The turkey feathers are real although he did not say what happened to the turkey. The bear's head won him fourth place at a scroll saw picnic in Branson, Missouri.

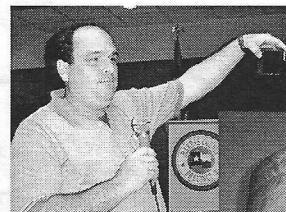
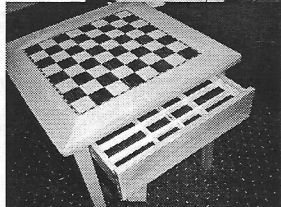


Lon Kelley explained how he crafted the woven pattern using sixteenth inch material and a mandrel for support. Black epoxy fills in the spaces.

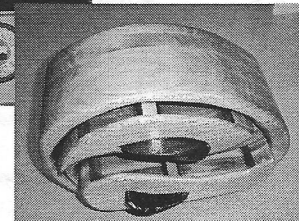


John Holden did not explain to club members how to play chess or checkers but he did say that he made the table of quartersawn sycamore. The table also features walnut and maple playing squares glued to plywood but with small gaps between them to allow for expansion.

John holds up the jig he used to cut the squares.



James Powers showed club members his bandsawed boxes made of sycamore and finished in polyurethane.



Current Work photos & text by Gary Rowen

Club Contacts

- Jim Robertson, *President* [REDACTED]
- Walter Mason, *Vice-President* [REDACTED]
- Gary Rowen, *Secretary* [REDACTED]
- Al Morrow, *Treasurer* [REDACTED]
- Ken Kooser, *Director* [REDACTED]
- Paul Koury, *Director* [REDACTED]
- Tom Matkin, *Director* [REDACTED]
- Mike Kelly, *Director* [REDACTED]
- Gary Rowen, *Webmaster* [REDACTED]
- Joe Edelen, *Name Tags* [REDACTED]
- John Gay, *Book Library* [REDACTED]
- Blaine Stokes, *Video Library* [REDACTED]
- Loretta Buckley, Bill Hochmuth, *Coffee Committee*
- Bill White, *Communications Director and Newsletter*
- Editor* [REDACTED]



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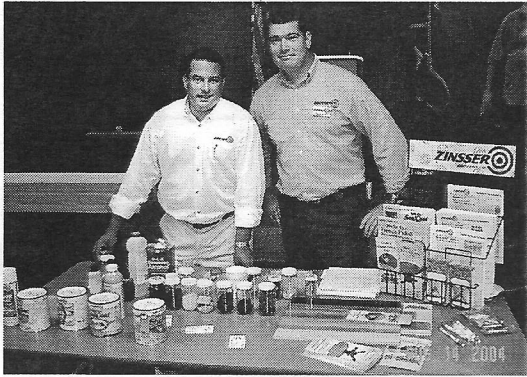
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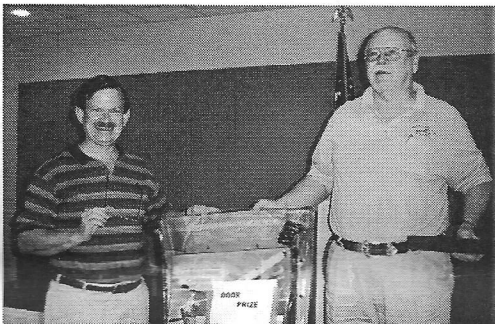
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Zinsser representatives, **Paul Chadick III and Gene Hoyas**, talked to club members about Zinsser shellac products. Zinsser has been in business since 1849 and is the first company in the U.S. to specialize in shellac. Shellac comes from India and Southeast Asia. For further details or more information contact Mr. Chadick or Mr. Hoyas at www.zinsser.com.



Door prize winner, **John Holden**, receives the laser level from Ken Kooser.

Annual BBQ Party **October 16, 2004**
Baylands Community Pavillion
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Dear Fellow Woodworkers,

I want to thank you for allowing me to speak to you in May about Occupational Therapy in the area of Mental Health. That Saturday after the meeting, Bill and I cut up and routed all the wood we got from **Todd Burch's** truck into small plaques. I brought about 50 to work the following Monday. Do you know that in 3 weeks they were gone? Our patients have used them for decoupage, small tole painting, a base for gravel art, and one even designed a set of coasters! In April, **Glenn Edwards** kindly came to our house and dropped of a gallon of glue and a snazzy applicator which is being used on a daily basis. **Chuck Maxwell**, called me to confirm specifics for sizes and delivered a box of custom cut plaques he made from scraps.

June's newsletter cover story quoted the mission statement of the WWCH, which is to promote woodworking skills, techniques, and safer woodworking habits and conditions. Each of those are in their own right can justify membership to this fine club. However, the enthusiasm, the generosity, and most importantly the WWCH fellowship are what make me proud and excited to be a member.

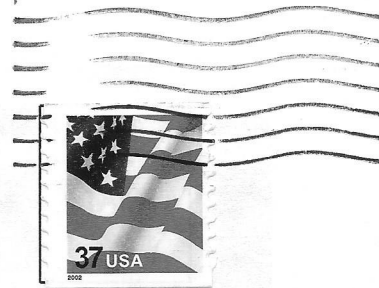
Thank you everyone for giving back to your community!

With Best Regards,

Sally White, COTA

Woodworkers Club *of Houston*

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MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

WWCH Monthly Meeting: September 11

August program: Mr. Len Fleury on "How to Make a Windsor Chair."

Next Monthly Meeting: October 9



**Gary Rowen
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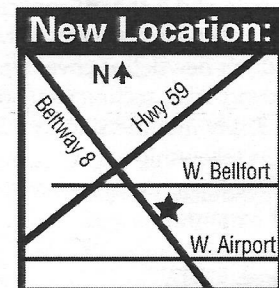
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