

BAY AREA WOODWORKERS ASSOCIATION

MEETING ANNOUNCEMENTS

AUGUST 1998

August 20 Meeting**3rd Thursday****REFRESHMENTS 7:00PM****MEETING STARTS 7:30PM**

Make a few cuts, drill a few holes, set a few biscuits. For this month's meeting we'll be back at **THE JAPAN WOODWORKER** in Alameda. **Dewalt Tools** will be displaying and demonstrating their well-known, bright yellow line of power tools. The Japan Woodworker has graciously agreed to host us again, because they know we are temporarily homeless. So bring your checkbook and come see what's new from Dewalt. Call the store at 510/521-1810 for directions to the The Japan Woodworker.

HOW TO GET LOST IN ALAMEDA:

880 South: Take the 23rd Avenue off ramp. Be careful to take 23rd Avenue West (towards the water). 23rd feeds into the Park St bridge (to your right). After you cross the bridge turn right at the first stop light (Clement). Take Clement about 1 mile north. The marina will be on your right. About 1/2 block before it dead ends on Grand St., you'll see 1731 Clement on the right side of the Street. Parking is on the street.

880 North: Take High Street exit. Cross the High Street bridge onto the island. Go down to Encinal. Take Encinal north all the way to Grand (over 1 mile) turn right on Grand. Go east to Clement. Turn right on Clement and look for 1731 on your left about 1/2 block down. Parking is on the street.

OFFICERS

President Mike Bray 510/595-8168
Vice Pres. Frank Hungler 650/343-9559
Secretary Tony Fanning 650/323-1183
Treasurer Linda Salter 650/365-4093
Newsletter Craig Mineweaser .. 408/926-1900

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Program Stan Booker 510/522-7879
Hospitality Gene Wagg 510/527-5805
 and Don Wagg 510/769-8901
Membership .. Pending
Shows Pending
Outreach Arnie Champagne . 415/282-1704
Librarian Rodney Finlay 650/747-0657

For any questions or information about BAWA programs, contact Stan Booker (evenings).

LAST MEETING

by The Editor

Guests **Mike Downing**, carpenter; **Volkmar Druebbisch**, who's interested in joinery, **Mason Gooch**, a furniture builder and cabinet maker, and **Norm Steiner**, a general handyman, were introduced. A dovetail jig-making device was raffled off. In response to last month's request, member **Jim Voos** has generously offered to donate a computer for the club's use at the November woodworking show. President **Mike Bray** asked everyone to think about what they would like to put in the show to demonstrate the breadth of the woodworking activities of our members. The show will be November 6, 7 & 8.

(continued on page 8)

Upcoming 1998 BAWA Meetings

Sept 17 - **Warren Wise** of "The Woodsman," a custom mill, will discuss "Tools of the Trade." Place T.B.A.

Oct. 20 - Woodturning Demonstration by our members. Place T.B.A.

MEMBER FAVORITES

Have you got a favorite place for buying tools, lumber, supplies, etc.? Let the editor know so it can appear in this list.

Woodworkers Co-op

Dave Tucker's pick:

Northwest Fine Woodworking Cooperative Go back and read Dave's pitch for forming a group like them here in the Bay area (in the June issue of BAWA News), then check out their web site at <http://www.nwfinewoodworking.com/> or call Dave at 415/433-1900 for more info.

(Note: This is not an endorsement by BAWA. It is the sole opinion of the member(s) listed.)

SEND IT IN

Have something you want published in this newsletter?

Tell our members about: Ideas for future meetings, photographs, announcements, exhibits, shows or events?

Send to:

BAWA Newsletter Editor

3251 Almansa Court

San Jose, CA 95127-1001

or

408/926-1900 voice

408/926-7078 fax

researchchem@msn.com e-mail

Next issue DEADLINE:

August 31, 1998

MEET BAWA MEMBER: Yeung Chan

by Craig Mineweaser

We return this month to interviewing our members. Elsewhere in this newsletter you can read about Yeung Chan's rediscovery of ancient Chinese joinery. Here you get to read about how he came to study this furniture. -- The Editor.

Yeung Chan's struggle from a forced farmer in China to a gifted maker of "jewelry for the house" took 33 years and a very special person with extraordinary talent combined with a determined focus to live his life according to his values. Immediately after graduating from high school in Canton, Yeung was sent to a farm. In his four years there, he learned to grow rice and cotton, to raise pigs, and perform other farm chores, but he dreamed of a better life. His journey started with two days and three nights of trekking through the mountains and across the rivers of China in constant danger of being caught. Many tried to make the same trip and some didn't survive. But Yeung did - escaping to a better life in Hong Kong. Once there he worked as a factory laborer, delivery person and then a printing apprentice. But Yeung wanted to explore the outside world and in 1973, at the age of 26, he came to the US. Arriving with two suitcases, one set of clothes, one book, and \$20 in his pocket, he desperately looked for work in the printing trade but faced discrimination as a new immigrant. Finally he got work on the graveyard shift of a printing company 1-1/2 hours across the city. Sometimes falling asleep on the return subway trip the conductor would kick him off at the terminus of the line at Coney Island, and Yeung would have to take another subway back to his stop. His local experience paid off as he worked his way up through several companies. Even though by now Yeung was an accomplished printer, he went to the New York School of Printing at night in the hope that once armed with a certificate, he could get into the printer's union and increase his wages, but this didn't work out.

Later Yeung went to work for the printing division of Hartfield-Zodys Company. After one year, when the company closed the entire division, Yeung was considered so exceptional they offered him a job in the printing department of the Los Angeles headquarters. Instead, Yeung joined Lever Brothers where he worked for two years. By this time, Yeung had married Ping, who had also escaped from China and came to New York City. They had met each other when they were on the farm. In 1977 they sold all their belongings and drove to California. They visited Los Angeles, but didn't like it. But they did like San Francisco and decided to stay there and start all over again.

As a skilled printing technician Yeung had reached a ceiling in the printing trade, so another change was in order. He began again as a laborer, this time for Metropolitan Furniture, a contract furniture company in South San Francisco. He demonstrated his machine skill and design ability, and as he improved the tooling and production methods, they continued to advance him. Eventually the pattern maker's job in the milling department opened up. Of course, Yeung got it but only after he trained not one, but two new people to take over his old job. Again Yeung met disbelief that he could do this job. Finally the company president told the department manager, "If in talking, Yeung is not as good as you and me, when he picks up a pencil to draw, he is better than both of us."

Yeung continued to advance through all of the technical positions at the company, eventually becoming product engineer and eventually research and development manager. During his 12 years at Metropolitan, he helped create many award-winning furniture designs for the company, but Yeung again reached

(continued on page 4)

Membership?

from the Editor

Have you thought about what BAWA gives you?

If you think BAWA is worthwhile, then sit down right now and fill out the form to the right to join or to renew. Then either **bring it with your check** to the next meeting and give it to the treasurer, or mail them to her at the address listed.

If you're a new member, welcome!

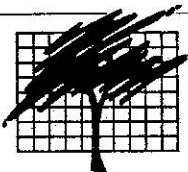
If you're renewing, thank you and remember we still need the info, so fill out the form and send it in.

*We've started sending
notices to members who
forgot to pay their dues for
this year, so send in your
money today to ensure these
newsletters keep coming!*

BAWA: Who We Are

The Bay Area Woodworkers Association was formed in 1982 by a small group of dedicated people who felt the need to strengthen the woodworking community by holding regular meetings, establishing an informal forum for the exchange of knowledge and ideas, sponsoring shows and meeting others in woodworking and related fields. Since then, this non-profit organization has grown to many members.

BAWA meets on the third Thursday of the month at 7:00 PM. Meetings usually have a specific topic, such as router techniques, finishing, turning, or business aspects of woodworking; or focus on a distinguished guest speaker who gives a presentation in his area of expertise. Meetings are held at wood-working shops and businesses in the Bay Area or at a permanent club meeting place (as soon as a new one is found. (See notice on page 5.)



**BAY AREA
WOODWORKERS
ASSOCIATION**

Membership Application / Renewal

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip +4 _____

Work Phone () _____

Home Phone () _____

Profession: _____

Speciality/Interests (List): _____

Skill Level: ☐ Professional ☐ Amateur ☐ Beginner

☐ Please don't circulate my name/address to other organizations.

I would be willing to volunteer for:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Elected Officer | <input type="checkbox"/> Greeter for Guests/New Members |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Program Committee or Chairman | <input type="checkbox"/> Hospitality for Guest Speakers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nominating/ Election Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting Set-Up/Clean-Up |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Special Events Coordinator | <input type="checkbox"/> Making <i>Toys for Tots</i> projects |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organize Tours-Woodworkers' Shops | <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach and Community Projects |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trade Show Staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Librarian for Video Library |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Show and Exhibit Coordination | <input type="checkbox"/> Handling AV Equipment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter articles or Editor | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity for BAWA in Local Press | |

Check as many as you want, but check at least one.

BAWA Membership Dues

BAWA dues are currently \$25.00 per year (family memberships are \$30.00 per year) payable by December for the following year.

Membership can begin during any month of the year. Make check payable to **BAWA**. Bring it **AND THIS FORM** to the monthly meeting, or mail to:

BAWA TREASURER
2527 1/2 Graceland Avenue
San Carlos, CA 94070

Membership Application/Renewal

MEET BAWA MEMBER: Yeung Chan *(con't. from p. 2)*

the ceiling of the technical jobs available. Yeung preferred to work with his hands rather than being in management. Realizing he really liked the challenge of each new project, in 1991 he and a partner struck out on their own with a design studio. Still he yearned to be his own boss, choosing what he would design and build. He soon enclosed the 400 square foot patio at the rear of their house, turning it into a shop to build prototypes and residential, custom furniture.

About this same time, "I realized I wanted to learn more and take my skill to a higher level." By now he and Ping had two boys, Wesley (now 14) and Brian (now 18.) So, after several years of saving money and a long family discussion, Yeung again left home, this time with his family's full support. He went to Fort Bragg for 9 months to study under world famous Jim Krenov, at the College of the Redwoods. Since his return last year he has spent many hours investigating and studying the designs and construction methods of ancient Chinese furniture. Examples of his discoveries of Chinese joinery methods can be seen in a display at one end of the Asian Art Museum's exhibit showcasing 40+ pieces of Chinese furniture from the 16th to the mid-18th Century. *(Editor's note: You can see the result of some of Yeung's discoveries elsewhere in this issue, but you should also go see this show before it closes on Sept 6.)*

Yeung has some comments about production furniture, much of which is made of particleboard and other composite materials. "This is material processing by machine, not fine woodworking." On the use of hand tools in the production world he says for example, "A chisel may be around (the workbench), but it is used to clean up glue if not for opening cans." At Metropolitan, "I came to know many types of woodworking machinery, but now I do fine woodworking, which (for me) is the combination of

different kinds of wood, wood grain, and color with fine workmanship and design in order to make a piece very beautiful - one that will last for generations. It is jewelry for the house!"

However, when talking to Yeung, what really comes out as important to him is that one should always do his or her best, and to constantly learn and improve. He has lived his life by these principals. Yeung is also teaching this to his children and others.

His shop has a modest compliment of the usual power tools. Yeung makes many of his own hand tools saying, "Even way back in China I made knives because I couldn't afford to buy them, but also because I could get better quality. I like to make my own tools, I can make any size I want to do a particular job." He adds, "The tool is a helping hand used to achieve a goal. Making my own tools gives me great satisfaction."

Yeung's rise from a forced farmer in China to a self-employed, highly skilled artisan furniture maker has been an interesting journey with many changes in direction. Now you often see his name in the woodworking press for winning prizes, contributing articles and sharing with others his tremendous knowledge of fine woodworking (as he did last month with us). His focus is always on fine work and continual improvement.

By the time you read this, Yeung and his family will be on the East Coast, helping Brian begin college at M.I.T. Also they will visit their old friends in New York City for the first time since coming to California 21 years ago. I think Yeung has not only figured out the ancient Chinese way of building furniture, he has figured out life. He says, "What's life mean? Family, friends and work - each are important and must be balanced. I am very thankful I have all of these."

FOR SALE

Delta Combination Sander. 12" disc and 6" x 48" belt. \$600.00. Call 510/797-9046

Hitachi P10F, 12" Thickness Planer with extra knives. **Delta DJ-20, 8" Jointer** with stand. **Powermatic 66, 10" tilting arbor Table Saw** with 50" **Biesmeyer Fence.** **Grizzly G1028 Dust Collector.** Call 415/861-2453

Clock Parts. A variety of leftovers including pendulums, brass weights, clock faces, chime movements, electric motors, etc for making grandfathers type clocks and others. Parts too numerous to mention all. Make offer for all or part. I can bring to next meeting. Call 408/926-1900.

Members, if you've got a woodworking tool for sale, place your ad here. You know your item will go to a good home!

BAWA VIDEO LIBRARY

*Our video library is being re-built after being totally lost in a flood. If you have a video to donate or if you would like to rent one, see our librarian, **Rodney Finlay** next meeting. Here's what's available as of 7/16/98:*

- Build A Shaker Table** by Kelly Mehler
- Carousel Horse Carving** by Tom Wade
- Hand Applied Finishes - Applying Top Coats** by Jeff Jewitt
- Hand Applied Finishes - Coloring Wood** by Jeff Jewitt
- House Framing** by Dean Johnson
- Intarsia** by Judy Roberts
- Making Mortise and Tenon Joints** by Frank Klausz
- Mastering Woodworking Machines** by Mark Duginske
- Router Jigs and Techniques** by Cory
- Router Jigs, Tips and Techniques** by Maas and Fortune
- Shop Secrets from Master Craftsmen** by Dunbar, Eakes, Klaus & Truini
- Small Shop Tips and Techniques** by Jim Cummins
- Tablesaw Tricks and Jigs** by Kelly Mehler
- Woodbending** by Marc Adams

LAST MONTH'S PRESENTATION

by Tony Fanning & Craig Mineweaser

How does a truly skilled craftsman demonstrate a variety of intricate joinery techniques to a large audience in a short presentation? Well, if you're the ever modest **Yeung Chan**, you first spend a full month (over 300 hours) designing and building a complete classic style, horseshoe-back Chinese chair, which demonstrates amazing joinery techniques that you have rediscovered by hours of investigation and study. Then you proceed to assemble the whole thing in front of the audience like a magician! There, we've said it, so you aren't kept in suspense as we were. Yeung's presentation on Chinese joinery was a delight on many levels. If you didn't know ahead of time what he would do it was like magic when it happened. Members of the BAWA audience at *Hafele* let out their breath as Yeung tapped the last joint into place. Member **Rodney Finlay** exclaimed, "Three-dimensional poetry!"

If you did know what Yeung was about to do, you were still blown away by his presentation technique. You could see the chair growing one joint at a time. Yeung's construction illustrations and his logical progression through examples of Chinese joinery were that clear.

In typical Yeung style, he started by saying, "Furniture is just cutting the pieces and putting them together - but HOW (you do this) is the challenge." He then gave us a brief history of Chinese furniture. For example, the first chairs appeared about 1200-1300 and the golden age for this classical chair design was from the 16th Century to the late 18th. Yeung says, "form and technique were blended well at this time."

Yeung divided his talk into two parts, the joinery part and the tool part. At the end of his talk, he discussed some of the hand tools he has made which were on display (see Meet BAWA Member: Yeung Chan on page 2 for more on this.) The main part of the talk was devoted to a clear and very logical explanation of the various type

of joints found in antique Chinese furniture such as panel-to-rail, rail-to-rail, and a variety of connections of round stock to round stock.

Chinese furniture design is perfect for illustrating such joinery to us today because, as Yeung says, "from design to technique (it) is a treasure to have handed down to us." However, with the exception of about 3 old Chinese masters who are now in their ninety's, the information about HOW to do this is lost. So, Yeung had to essentially re-engineer, or recreate how they did each joint on his own, by careful observation and analysis.

Yeung proceeded through his demonstration adding one joinery technique at a time, illustrating each with a flip-chart drawing and a full-size example in wood. First he demonstrated the edge-joining of thin panels via tongue-and-groove. Then more elaborate thin panels joined with "Dragon and Phoenix" dovetail shaped keys, or with a spline. Yeung used splines to join the thin boards of the chair seat. These were placed in a grooved, rectangular frame which was constructed with mitered, mortise-and-tenon joinery. This is the basic frame-and-panel construction Yeung used for the chair seat.

Next, Yeung explained and demonstrated three basic square rail joint types, used to attach rectangular cross-sections at right angles. These can be seen in the first photograph (page 6) These are used in chair leg and back construction. The completed subassembly of the chair's side utilizing these joints can be seen in the second photograph.

Finally Yeung demonstrated joining round rails for a variety of effects. These are joining round rails in line as in the horseshoe chair back using an "in-line scarf joint with wedge nail and the in-line joint with spline tenon." Joining round rails at a right angle presents other challenges. In photograph number 3 (on page 6) Yeung is pointing to some of the solutions in the drawing while in his hand is the

curved horseshoe chair back assembly. Making these joints requires great care and precision, yet Yeung has some simple rules he follows: "I found the shape of the curved back by sitting down and measuring myself. You check the picture of the chair and eyeball the relationship of each piece. No calculating, just look at it's proportion. The basic rule of joining two pieces is: Don't make either piece stronger than the other."

Obviously it takes a little more skill and finesse than his basic rules would suggest in order to achieve such an exquisite chair as he shows assembled in photograph number 4. But Yeung believes this comes to those who are willing to practice and learn. Obviously we were in the presence of a true craftsman.

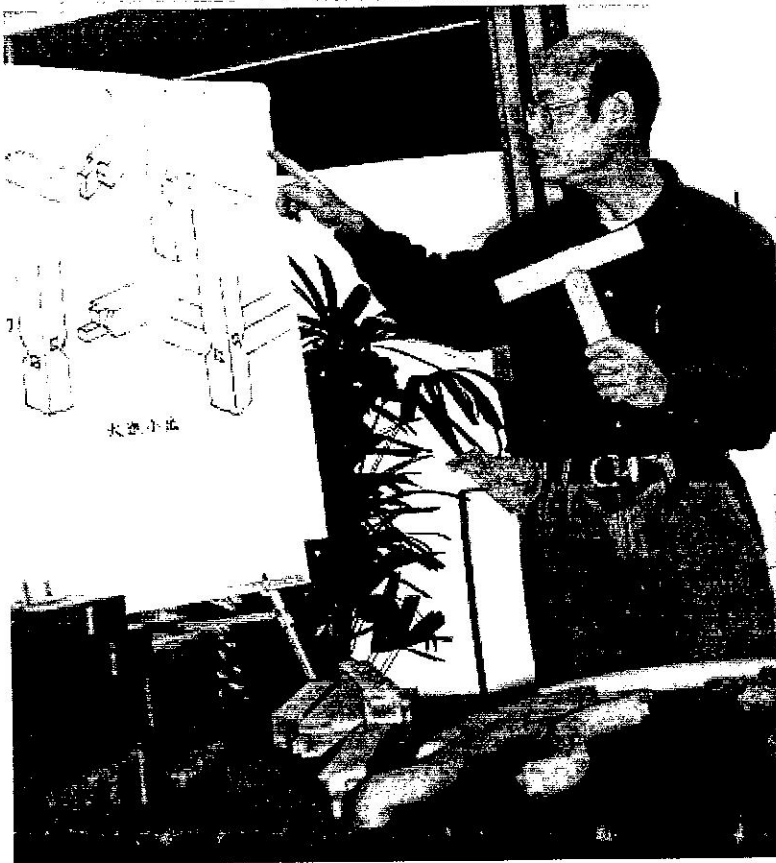
For example the way the curved, round horseshoe shaped back is joined to the round, vertical, rear leg is a particularly challenging joint. Yeung says he "fought with the question of how they did it." He knew the angle he wanted to achieve was 27 degrees, but it was still a challenge to figure out how the mortise and tenon could actually be shaped. His breakthrough came when he thought of the joint as the intersection of positive and negative cylinders. He then showed us how he drilled a hole through a square block, sliced the block lengthwise through the hole, turned it on its side and drilled a hole in the center of the trough at a 27 degree angle and, viola, he had a pattern to scribe onto the surface of the leg so he could use the router and spokeshave to shape the mortise and tenon on the angled curve.

At the end of his presentation Yeung discussed his tool making. He said for years he used his inexpensive Stanley chisels (you know the ones with the yellow plastic handles and the metal top for striking), as "the good ones I can't afford and the not so good ones are not worth having. Making your own gives you good tool quality and you can design your own handle."

(continued on page 6)

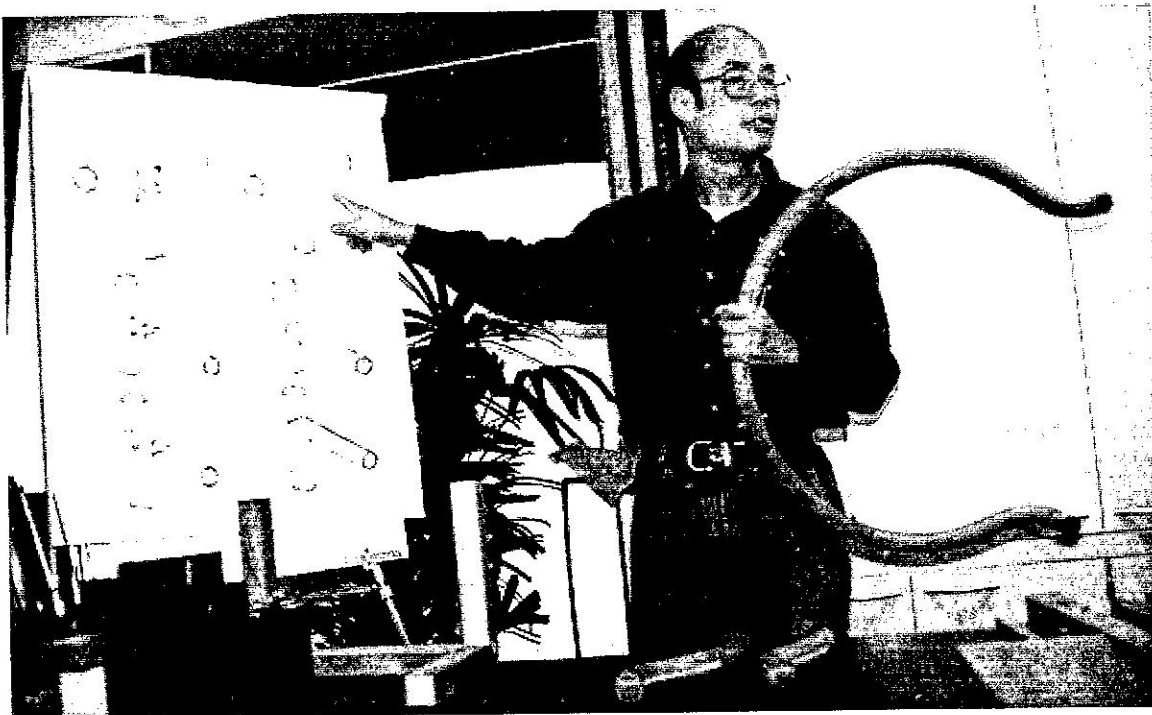
LAST MONTH'S PRESENTATION

(continued from page 5)



At the beginning of his talk, Yeung related a story to us of what the judge said to him when he was sworn in as an American. "You have become an American, and when you do, you do not leave behind your culture, you bring it with you." Yeung adds that since coming to America, "I have learned a whole lot more." By showing us such an excellent presentation of such highly skilled workmanship, Yeung Chan shared some of the culture he brought with him and he allowed us to learn a whole lot more about joinery.

Yeung is explaining the various kinds of square rail joints. Photo 1



While holding the five piece, horseshoe shaped back in one hand, Yeung is pointing out some of the many joints used to connect round pieces. Photo 3

These four photos show just a few of the steps Yeung Chan used to demonstrate the many unique joints used in a classic Chinese wood-working by assembling a variety of them in order. Piece fit to piece, until finally a beautiful Chinese chair sat on the demonstration table and the BAWA audience let out its collective breath and applauded.

Look for the October issue of Woodwork magazine, at newstands in a few weeks, for the entire series of photos of his presentation in a feature article on this chair.



Yeung assembles the side of the chair. Note the leg transitions from square to round.

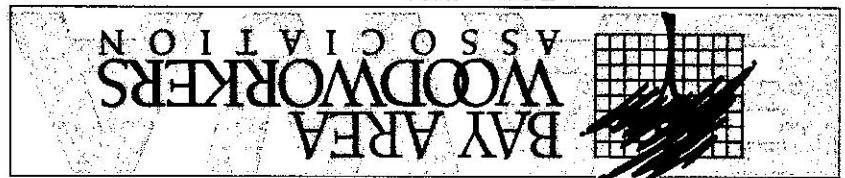
Photo 2



The final assembly of the chair. Note the structural yet decorative flat supports he's inserting under the front of the arms.

Photo 4

San Mateo, CA 94402-5481
PO Box 5481



LAST MEETING

(continued from page 1)

Treasurer **Linda Salter** reported a balance of \$1201.77 in our account. Program Chair **Stan Booker** has set all of our meetings for the rest of the year. (Keep watching the bottom of page 1 in each issue for more details.) Librarian **Rodney Finlay** reported that three more video tapes had been donated to help build our library back up.

Show-and-Tell:

Linda Salter brought a toy wagon she made for her grand daughter. It contains a set of blocks in eleven shapes and ten colors. Her one year old's name is spelled out in the center blocks. This brightly colored toy is bound to give her hours of fun. **Mike Bray** showed a work in progress. This is another project using **Bob Prince's** Canadian Maple. This time Mike is making a very intricate mailbox for mounting on his front porch. Each side of the box consists of a maple frame, assembled with through mortise and

tenon joints to surround a bamboo style screen. The screens consist of 150 short dowls, all cut by hand from supermarket bamboo skewers. Then the frame is drilled (300 holes) and the dowls placed in it, all by hand. He then demonstrated this labor-intensive process he's using to produce this unique and beautiful piece. Secretary **Tony Fanning** said he had a "Tell" for the Show and Tell. He described the joinery examples, created by tonight's speaker **Yeung Chan**, at the antique Chinese furniture exhibit currently at the *Asian Art Museum*. "They are behind a screen, apart from the rest of the exhibit." It is the only part where you are actually encouraged to touch the materials. "I loved to hear the kids playing with them."

GIMME SPACE!

HELP! We're homeless! The Mainliner Club, our regular meeting place for years, is no longer available to us. We are meeting at various stores and workshops for a while, but as winter comes we will need to return to a semipermanent home for our meetings.

You, our members, have already responded with several places that might work out for us, but nothing is firm yet. So, please help by calling at least one local city, town, school, club, marina, church, community center or anywhere that might have a meeting hall for 35 - 45 people. It should preferably be a West-Bay town, and be for free or very little money. Call **Mike Bray**, 510/595-8168 if you get any leads.