

Local Basketmaker Fashions Her Creations From Sweet Grass, Ash Splints

BY BETSY BAKER
Baskets. They line the shelves of Charlotte Morey's china cabinet, overflow onto chairs and tables, fill plastic bags in her kitchen, dining room and hall. Pick one up and the smell of summer is instantly in your nostrils. Mrs. Morey fashions them of sweet grass and ash splints; the sweet grass she gathers locally, strand by strand, and the ash splints she buys from the St. Regis Reservation at Akwesasne.

They come in all shapes and sizes, from tiny, ornamental baskets to large laundry baskets. And Mrs. Morey's creations also include vases, lampshades, pincushions and Christmas tree ornaments. People buy her baskets from her home at 2 Lawrence Ave., and she also exhibits at craft shows. In recent years Mrs. Morey has held classes in basketmaking in her home. She teaches four or five people at a time, holding a total of six hours worth

of classes. **Learned Skills Young** Mrs. Morey has made baskets all her life. As a child she helped her mother, who made and sold baskets to support the family, by doing the small, close weaving at the center of the basket. Now she does all the work herself. "This one I made in a day," she said last week in an interview, holding up a basket decorated with intricately woven dyed curls of ash splint. The weaving is easy and progresses quickly, Mrs. Morey said, although her skills seem nothing short of magical to the uninitiated. The hard part is the preparation, she said, hard because it is time-consuming. First the ash splints must be prepared. When Mrs. Morey buys them, they have been stripped from a black or white ash tree in long pieces.

She dampens them, then straightens and trims them with a sharp knife. Then, she shaves the splint on both sides, using a sharp knife to remove any loose pieces and give the splint a satiny look. After that, she uses a wooden splitter to split the splint to the desired thickness and uses a sharp-toothed hand tool to split the splint into different widths. Mrs. Morey uses clothing dye to color some of the splints blue and green and red, to be woven into the baskets for decoration. "I always make more with blue at Christmas. Men like the blue for gifts," she said. Splints may be used for the foundation of sweet grass baskets, although smaller baskets or ornaments may be made entirely of sweet grass.

August, when it has grown tall and fragrant in swampy fields. "You have to pick it one by one, then tie it in small bunches and dry it in the shade," she said. Some of the sweet grass she uses is braided into tiny strands before it is woven into a basket. "I have an old lady to make my braids," Mrs. Morey said. She herself once braided 45 yards of sweet grass in four hours while watching television. Younger women on the reservation

don't seem to want to take the time to learn basketmaking, Mrs. Morey said, and younger men no longer want to perform the tedious task of stripping ash wood for splints. But many women remain who can make baskets, and members of the younger generation, including her own grandchildren, are happy to receive them as gifts, she said. Mrs. Morey plans to continue holding classes in her home. She may be reached at 265-9463.



PREPARING SPLINTS — Mrs. Morey explained and demonstrated the preparation of the ash splints for use in basketmaking. Including this step, when the splints are separated into thin strips and polished. (Betsy Baker photo)



AT WORK — Mrs. Morey, who can complete an intricate basket in an afternoon, is shown above weaving fine ash splints around the edge of a basket. (Betsy Baker photo)



WITH HER CREATIONS — Mrs. Charlotte Morey of Potsdam is shown above with some of the baskets, Christmas ornaments and household items she has created from ash splints and sweet grass. Mrs. Morey, who teaches basketmaking classes in her home, is holding a partially finished basket. (Betsy Baker photo)

Wrestling Program To Continue

BY JARED THAYER
"We have a wrestling program," stated Potsdam School Board President Mary Ellen Frackenhoff last Tuesday night after the board approved Ralph Gabriel as Potsdam High School wrestling coach. The wrestling program had been in jeopardy because of the lack of a coach. Gabriel has two years' experience coaching wrestling, both at Christian Brothers Academy and as assistant coach at Potsdam College. Matt Tessmer, who served as assistant coach for football, will also serve as assistant coach for wrestling. In other action Tuesday night the

board received a check for \$2,500 from Clarkson College to be used to help offset the cost of the school system's computer program. A George Davis stated Clarkson College wants to support the continued development and expansion of the academic use of computers in the school system. For the past several years Clarkson has made donations to the school system in lieu of taxes.

The board approved participation in Booster Club-sponsored basketball and hockey tournaments to be held in Potsdam. Participation by boys hockey in the Canton Christmas hockey tournament was also approved. An offer to participate in the Lake Placid Hockey Tournament Feb. 3-5 was turned down since team members would miss a school day.

Key Pump Approved
In order to supply fuel for two recently acquired vans the school board approved purchase of an Agway key pump. The vans will be used for transporting the handicapped and the fuel will be bought at state contract price.

The board was informed that it would be necessary to pass a resolution allowing the Potsdam Police Department permission to enforce vehicle and traffic laws on school property. A draft of the resolution was submitted and will be voted on at the first meeting in December.

Theresa Logan, a teacher aide, withdrew a request for a change to teacher assistant. She will maintain seniority. Marlene Tartaglia was named as teacher assistant.

Karen Andrews and Cheryl Durant, two part-time high school cafeteria workers, have resigned. Their positions will be filled.

Education Week
Various activities will be held at the Lawrence Avenue Elementary School during American Education Week, Nov. 15-19.

On Monday the Crane Brass Quintet was featured at an assembly for grades four and five. Parent/teacher conferences were held on Tuesday with school being dismissed at 11 a.m.

On Thursday grandparents are invited to school to eat lunch with their grandchildren. The menu will include chicken with gravy and biscuit, green beans, ice cream and milk. The price is \$1.35.

Finishing the week on Friday will be an "olden days" school for the day. One child will be selected from each class and will be asked to dress accordingly.

Drawings by fifth graders from Lawrence Avenue School will be on display in the lobby of the Market Street office of the St. Lawrence National Bank during National Education Week. The students, under the direction of art teacher Andrea Cooper, recently drew the municipal buildings on Park Street.

Julia E. Crane To Be Topic Of Dissertation

BY BETSY BAKER
If you recognize the person described in the next paragraph, your personal recollections may aid a doctoral candidate in her research.

She was a pioneer music educator, an accomplished singer and conductor, a shrewd businesswoman. Under her guidance the Crane Department of Potsdam Normal School grew to prominence in the early years of this century.

She was Julia E. Crane, founder of the Crane Department of Music, later the Crane School of Music. Miss Crane is the subject of a doctoral dissertation, now in the research stages, to be written by Evelyn M. Baer, a doctoral candidate in music education at the University of Michigan.

In Potsdam last week to work in the Crane archives and conduct some interviews, Mrs. Baer explained her interest in Miss Crane.

"The things Julia Crane said about teacher training, about the need for practice teaching, are very contemporary," Mrs. Baer said. "She was a pioneer in teacher training in music education, in fact, her program may have been the first. Hers was the most famous early program to continue to the present day," she said.

Mrs. Baer holds degrees in music education and music theory, has taught public school music, and, at the University of Michigan, supervised instrumental student teachers.

And, while some research projects might be put off, Mrs. Baer said she had a "very strong feeling that this is a project that needed to be done at this time, because there are still some people alive who knew Miss Crane."

Last week Mrs. Baer interviewed two Crane alumna who had known Miss Crane, Dr. Helen Hosmer and

Holiday Bazaar Set

Many gift items, including knitted goods, herbs, Christmas wreaths and more, will be available at the Potsdam Hospital Guild's annual holiday bazaar, planned from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Nov. 20 in Thatcher Hall on the Potsdam College campus. Heading the various bazaar committees are Eileen Horton, Mary-Ann Cateforis, Donna Behnke, Betty Rowe and Cindy Talcott.

Fire Contracts Draw Heat In Norwood

NORWOOD — A lengthy and sometimes heated discussion took place Monday night between Norwood Village Board members and members of the Norwood Volunteer Fire Department over fire contracts for 1983.

Norwood firemen objected to Mayor Willard Smith's refusal to sign a contract with the Town of Potsdam for \$10,000. Smith had said the village wanted \$16,000, while the firemen were willing to accept a lower figure.

After a demand that the board be polled, the trustees unanimously rejected the \$10,000 offer from the Town of Potsdam. The board agreed that \$12,000 would be acceptable. Some members of the fire department stated that \$10,000 is a 40 percent increase over this year's \$7,000, and is an acceptable figure.

Board members responded that the tax burden of the increasingly expensive fire department is too much for the 1,900 residents of Norwood to carry alone.

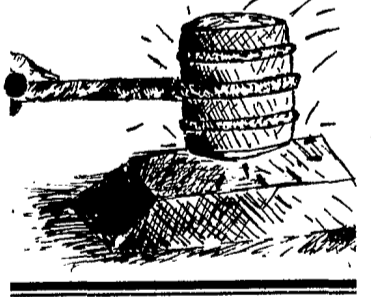
The Town of Stockholm offer of \$250 was also rejected. If the village has no contract with a town the fire department has no insurance and will not respond to initial calls. Mutual aid calls made by a department already on the scene will not be affected. The offer of the Town of Norfolk of a

\$1 contract was refused. The firemen brought up the fact that there is a direct line alarm from the Norwood-Norfolk High School to the Norwood Fire Station. If the village has no contract with the town, legally the firemen should not respond to the alarm but wait for a mutual aid call from a department already on the scene. The possibility of contracting with the school itself was suggested to help insure maximum safety for the students.

Truck Bids Rejected
After months of controversy, proposals and counter-proposals, all bids for a new firetruck for the village were rejected Monday night.

The board and village firemen agreed, however, that the truck should be rebid to Grumman, one of the original bidders. It would be legally restricted bidding to allow for standardization of equipment, officials said.

A formal complaint over the safety of the crosswalk in front of Norwood Elementary School on Prospect Street was made by concerned residents. The suggestion was made to place a moveable stop sign in the street while school is in session, similar to the sign Potsdam has. The board agreed to investigate the regulations concerning such a sign.



Area Meetings At A Glance

- WEDNESDAY**
Parishville Town Board, 7:30 p.m., Nov. 17, Parishville Town Hall.
Black River-St. Lawrence Regional Development and Planning Board, 10 a.m., Nov. 17, 2nd floor conference room, Smith Office Building, Canton.
St. Lawrence County Environmental Management Council, 7:30 p.m., Nov. 17, county court room, Canton.
- THURSDAY**
Potsdam Village Planning Board, 7:30 p.m., Civic Center.
Tri-Town Chamber of Commerce inter carnival meeting, 8:30 p.m., Nov. 18, at the Chamber office, Brasher Falls.
- MONDAY**
Norfolk Town Board, public hearing on increase in water, sewer rates, 7:30 p.m., Nov. 22, Norfolk Town Hall.
- TUESDAY**
Norfolk Town Board, public hearing on increase in water, sewer rates, 7:30 p.m., Nov. 23, Raymondville Community Hall.



COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS — Members of Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity at Potsdam College recently volunteered to help the Village of Potsdam's beautification program with its improvements to the downtown area. Using spring bulbs donated by the Potsdam Garden Club and the Potsdam Chamber of Commerce, the fraternity members planted bulbs near the Civic Center and at three downtown locations. Shown from left are Bob Russo, Ken Davey, Jerry Fordham and fraternity president Bill Schramm. (Betsy Baker photo)