

Rod Rack

Conducted by Dick Finlay

Guides and Grips

EVERETT GARRISON WITH HOAGY B. CARMICHAEL



Sketch of Garrison at work by Robert Seaman.

[Appearing in this issue's Rod Rack are two passages from *A Master's Guide to Building a Bamboo Rod* by Everett Garrison with Hoagy B. Carmichael. These excerpts are from Chapter 13, and superstitious folk may tell you that this chapter is appropriately numbered, for it deals with such post rod-building matters as the repair and replacement of broken or damaged rods and rod components as well as with the maintenance of rods. The two sections below are also of value to do-it-yourself owners of glass and graphite rods. Dave Engerbretson's review of this book appears in this issue's Fly Fisherman's Bookshelf. DICK FINLAY.]

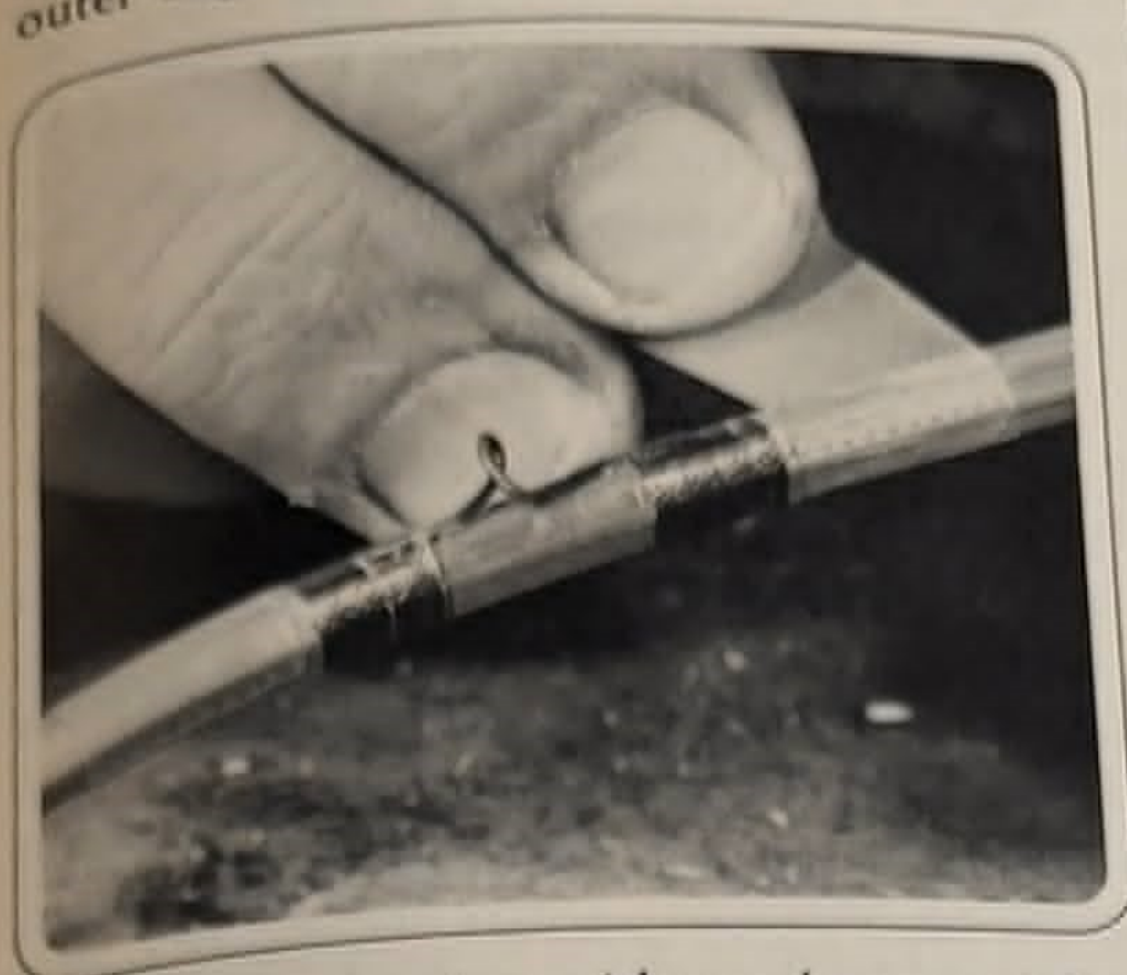
Replacing Bent or Broken Guides

If somehow one of the guides on your rod has broken off, is irreparably bent, or is grooved by line wear, you have a dilemma on your hands. The question is whether to remove the varnish and all the other guides, or to concern yourself only with the broken one. If the offender is the top guide your problems are simplified by the fact that once you have replaced it, you have only to revarnish the uppermost tip winding. But if you find that one of the intermediate guides needs replacing, and you don't want to rewind and revarnish the whole section, you will need to follow another course. It should be understood that the following pro-

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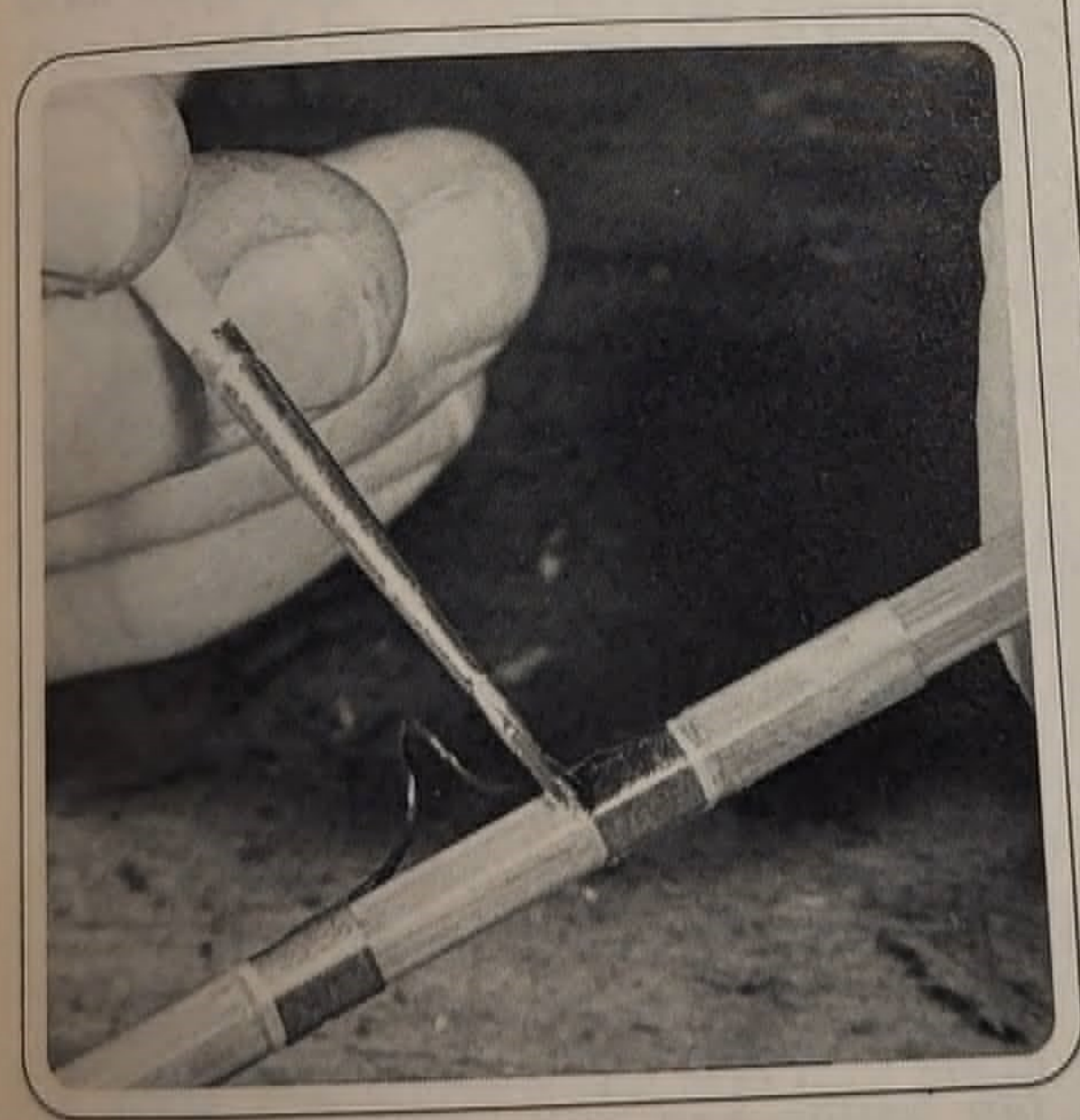
cedure is only meant as a temporary repair as all quality rods should eventually be completely stripped, rewound and re-varnished, even if only one guide needs to be replaced.

Assuming one of the snake guides has been irreparably bent, you should first make two wraps with Scotch tape on the outer edge of each winding. Be sure the



The first step in guide replacement is to tightly wrap Scotch tape close against the last thread wrapping on either side.

tape is tightly wrapped and snug up against the last turn of the old silk. Now dab some varnish remover on the old windings and on the varnish between the two pieces of tape. If the tape is put on the rod correctly, it will protect the coating of varnish underneath it. When the surface is cleaned with denatured alcohol, you can mount a new guide between the wraps of tape. In doing this, try to make your last silk wrap as close to the edge of the tape as possible. Brush on a protective coat of varnish or shellac, whichever



After the guide has been replaced and rewrapped between the tape wrappings, brush on a protective coat of varnish or shellac.

will eventually give you a winding that matches the others, and then hang it to dry.

If the winding you are rewrapping and subsequently revarnishing is either of those next to the ferrules, you can dip varnish the new silk wraps. But if, as is

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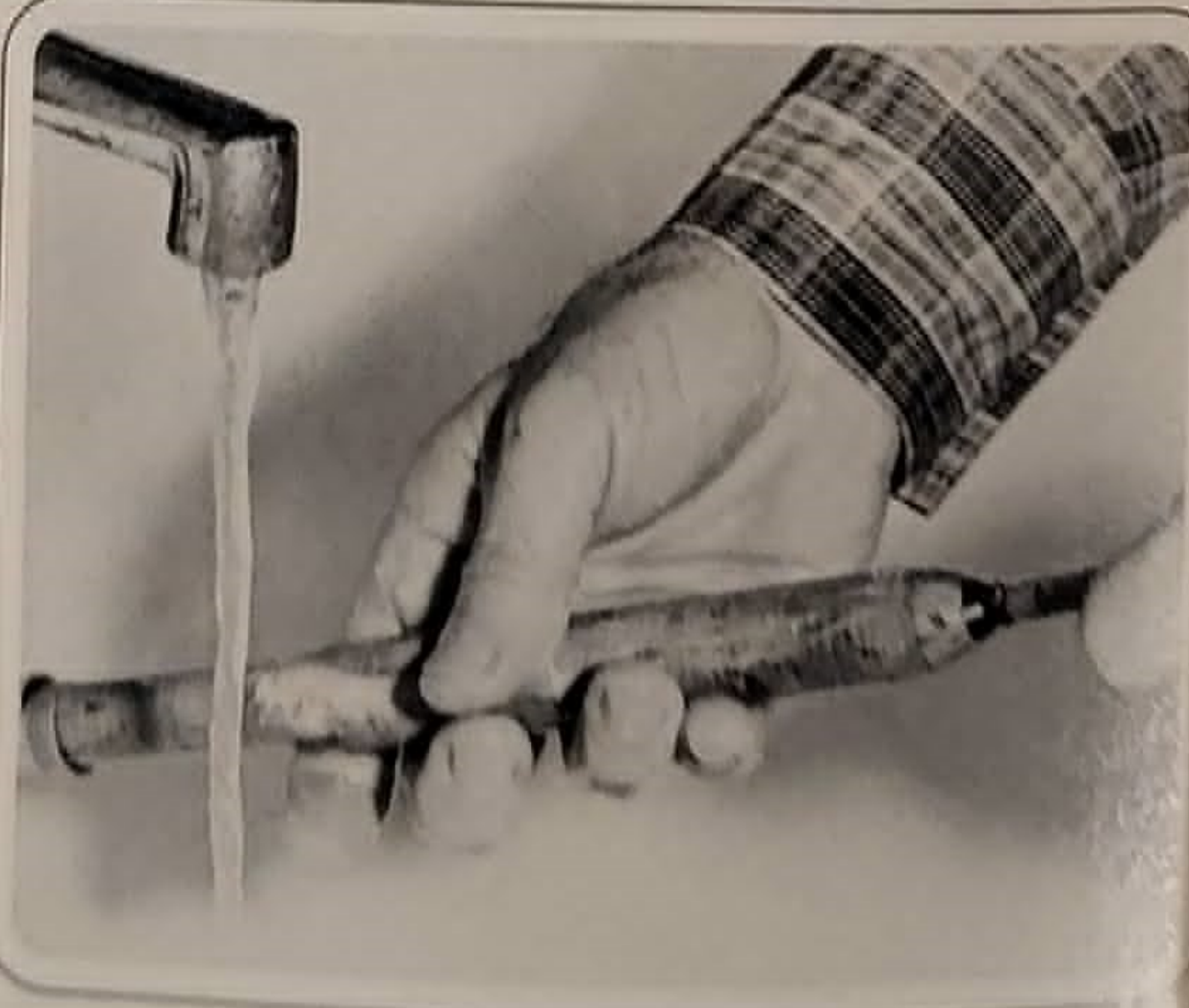
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usually the case, the guide that needed re-wrapping was somewhere in the middle of the rod section, you will have to brush the new coating of varnish on the silk wraps and the short section of the rod. Brush on four coats in between the two turns of tape if you are working with a butt section, and only three coats if it was a tip guide that was replaced.

When the coats of varnish have dried completely, unwind the two pieces of tape and inspect the intersection of the new and old varnish. You may have a small ridge or depression at this spot. If it is your custom to wipe the glossy appearance of the varnish down with pumice and oil, you will be able to satisfactorily smooth over the unsightly ridge. Rub the area lightly with 6/0 steel wool until you have removed as much of the varnish line as you dare. Then complete the job by rubbing down the entire section that was repaired with pumice and oil. This method can also be used if one of the silk wrappings has become frayed and begins to unwind. If that is the case, it is best to unwind both of the wraps on either foot of the guide and proceed as outlined above.

Cleaning and Repairing the Cork Grip

With use, any cork grip will become worn and dirty. With proper care, you can make the grip of your rod last almost as long as the bamboo itself. If you use one rod consistently, and fish a lot, you may wear irreparable depressions, or even holes, in the grip, and you will then have to remove the reel seat and the old cork and rebuild them.



To clean a soiled grip, hold under warm tap water and rub with a generous amount of an abrasive cleanser like Comet or Ajax with your fingers. Afterward you can re-bleach the cork with Clorox.

If your grip has darkened considerably from dirt and the oils from your hand and needs a good cleaning, you should get a bottle of Clorox and a can of an abrasive cleanser like Ajax or Comet. Run the tap water until it is rather warm, and soak the cork. Then rub a goodly amount of

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cleanser into the cork with your fingers. Don't use steel wool or a stiff brush, as this would chip or furrow the cork, damage which is not easily repaired. The friction from your hand is enough to loosen any grime that has worked its way into the cork. When you feel that the grip is clean, wash off all of the cleanser and dab the cork dry with a towel. Pour one-half cup of Clorox in a pan and work it into the cork with your fingers. The Clorox will rebleach the cork and when the cork has been thoroughly washed and is dry, the end result will be a grip that once again has the appearance of a new handgrasp. The same treatment can be given to the skeleton reel seat of your rod if it should need attention. When working on the reel seat, be sure you don't allow too much water to collect in, and possibly under, the butt cap of the rod. Before you hang up the damp grip and reel seat to dry, tap the butt cap several times in an effort to shake out any excess water from under its hood.

Most cork skeleton reel seats sooner or later become disfigured by the seating of the reel tang and the gripping pressure of the reel band. These ridges and depressions can be removed with the aid of an ordinary steam kettle. Heat the kettle until the water is boiling and the spout has



If the ring of a skeleton grip or the tangs of the reel seat have caused depressions in the cork, these disfigurements may be raised by rotating the bruised cork over a jet of steam.

a good head of steam. Rotate the bruised cork over the jet of steam until the depressions rise back into their normal rounded shape. When you are satisfied that the rings are restored, wipe off the cork and once again hang the rod to dry.

If your grip, or reel seat, has developed chips in the cork, there are two methods that can be used to alleviate the problem. The simplest is to mix up a batch of Weldwood glue and cork dust and, with a spatula, apply the amount needed to the holes in the handgrasp. The mixture should be smoothed off as much as possible, level with the rest of the cork, so that the patch job can be lightly hand-sanded later when the mixture is dry. This procedure will do for very small holes, but is certainly not adequate if major surgery is needed.

