

Some Thoughts on Reedmaking

By: Michael Burns

- **Follow the Grain!**
- **You can take cane off, but you can't put it back on!**
- **"The Enemy of Good is Better"** -- don't try and tweak an adequate reed. It is WAY too easy to do too much and ruin it.
- **Patience is definitely a virtue** -- take your time with adjusting reeds. Don't try to do too much at any one time on a reed. They need time to adjust to the changes that you have made and settle in.
- **We all learn by trial and error.** Learn from your mistakes as well as from your successes. The more reeds you make, the more you will learn.
- **Balance is all-important!** But, there are several types of balance, e.g.:
 - Symmetrical--one blade vs. the other at the same point
 - Symmetrical--one side of the spine to the other on the same blade
 - Asymmetrical--relative thickness of the front vs. the back of the reed
 - Asymmetrical--relative thickness of the spine to the rails
- **A good reed is (usually) a compromise.** In order to have reeds that respond in all registers, loud and soft, short and long, tongued and slurred, with a good sound and stable pitch they may not be excellent in ANY of these areas. It is possible to make specialized reeds that, for example, tongue particularly well, or are fantastic in the high register but they may not perform all other duties satisfactorily.