



WOOD FORUM

Newsletter of the Sonoma County Woodworkers Association

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The Artist as Maker

by Art Hofmann

Jeffrey Dale is one of Sonoma County's best kept secrets. He has been making custom furniture since 1978 and has developed an aesthetic of his own based on the time, when as a young man, he traveled the world, and absorbed many cultural influences, and later, his own experience and practice. Jeff will explain to us how he has followed an inner vision and came to a formula of what furniture might be and look like.

Working for years in a small shop in Petaluma and now Cotati, he has been lucky enough to develop that vision, which was not derived from books or magazines such as *Fine Woodworking*, but his own unique past. He began in his teens by working on houses in the Bolinas area, where he met and talked with furniture makers such as Art Carpenter, who encouraged his efforts. Later, he paid a week-long visit to George Nakashima. He did a stint in art school, too, where he studied painting for four years, but then returned to furniture.



At times, he makes startling choices, using screws at critical joints, which, he maintains, will outlast traditional joinery. All in all, he remains a California original, one who has a lot to say about artistic choices and practical matters, and whose work is represented in important national collections.

When: Tuesday, February 3, 2015 @7pm

Where: Rancho Cotate H.S. Woodshop

The address of Rancho Cotate High School is 5450 Snyder Lane, Rohnert Park. Rancho's campus is close to Sonoma State University. The parking lot of RCHS is on the north end of the campus. Once parked, look to the east for the flag pole and walk in that direction until you see the plainly designated Woodshop in the northeast corner of the campus. It can be recognized by the huge dust collection cyclone and dumpster in front of it.

January Member's Meeting

by Walter Doll

The January 13 meeting was begun by Chairman Bob Moyer at 7:00 pm at the shop of Scott Borski in Petaluma on a clear, cool night.

This was a special meeting called annually to amend the bylaws and nominate and vote for officers on the Board of SCWA. A quorum was reached with 34 members in attendance. Bob proceeded by wishing us all a great new year in 2015 and asked for guests and new members to introduce themselves. Chuck Root introduced himself anew since he's not been in attendance for awhile. Anatole Burkin introduced himself as a guest. He's a former editor and publisher of *Fine Woodworking* magazine, now the vice president and digital content director for Taunton Press.

perimentation and play as part of the creative process. More info: PARC, 230 Lakeville St., Petaluma, 707-762-5600 ext. 100.

Scott also mentioned the FOG Design + Art show at Fort Mason in SF Jan 15-18th. This show is presented in collaboration with SFMOMA, and has workshops and presentations by gallery owners and dealers.

Bob thanked David and Victoria Marks for hosting our December Holiday meeting, complete with a show by Sonoma County's own homegrown music R&B group The Bench Doggs! Bob also thanked Scott Borski for hosting tonight's meeting.

Larry Stroud extended thanks to Anatole Burkin for donating DVDs to SCWA. Larry also mentioned that he, Art Hofmann, and Bob Moyer had met with Dana Woodman, who is putting together a community workshop in Sebastopol. This workshop is patterned after other membership shops wherein you join for \$45

site capabilities and subsequent bylaw changes, your Renewal Invoice will be posted 60 days before your Renewal Date, not the beginning of the year as it was in the past. Thus, members who joined in the past year will receive renewal invoices as their annual date rolls up on the calendar. Bill also announced 40 members have already renewed their membership in the first two weeks of the year. We had three new members in December and are now up to 125 members. Bill attributes the increase to our new website. Bill thanked the members who have sent in their renewal checks. Our finances have improved by \$1200.00 over our projections, primarily due to the increase in membership.

Along these lines it was suggested that we further support Bill Hartman's woodworking program at RCHS which is the last school in Sonoma County to focus on furniture making. Bill explained that Rancho Cotate High School and other schools also receive support



Member announcements: A 6 inch jointer is for sale for \$300. Look for specifics on our website. Don Naples has 25 mm Baltic birch BBB grade plywood and two horizontal boring machines for sale. One is a Davis & Wells, and the other is a Ritter.

Scott Borski announced a show at the Petaluma Arts Center Jan. 17- March 8th on the work of Charles and Ray Eames, legendary design duo who focused on ex-

a month and have use of the already open facility, with a larger 4,000 sq/ft. venue opening in May. The name of the workshop is Chimera Arts. (www.Chimeraarts.org.) This would be a good forum for our members to teach and/or attend classes.

We are in the process of completing membership renewals. Bill Taft explained that with the new web-

from North Coast Builders Exchange, and mostly teach construction related classes. The NCBE has been very supportive and consistent in their funding of industrial arts programs. SCWA donated \$400 to RCHS woodworking classes, which helps him pay for needed supplies such as lumber and sandpaper, and machinery repairs not funded by the school budget.

Bob continued with the vote on bylaw changes which

are driven by our new website, the necessity of having a website manager, Michael Wallace, on the Board, and term of membership changes. Mike Wallace made the motion to the membership to approve changes to the bylaws. This was seconded and unanimously approved. Bob Moyer announced his resignation as Board Chair effective Jan 15th. Bill Taft is also resigning from the Treasurer position, but will stay on until someone comes forward to volunteer. Bob went on to explain that we wanted to keep SCWA a vital and energized organization, which demands a good deal of volunteer effort from the members. In response to inquiries about the duties of the various board positions, and what might be expected of someone volunteering, the rest of the Board then described their jobs. It was emphasized that there is the opportunity to be mentored before taking on the Board position. Bill Taft nominated Michael Wallace for the webmaster position on the Board and Bob Moyer seconded it. A further motion was made to approve all Board members besides Bob. It was seconded and approved by unanimous consent.

At this point John Keller thanked the existing Board for an outstanding job and emphasized the opportunity for personal growth by volunteering to help the SCWA. Art Hofmann described the upcoming meeting set for Tuesday, February 3rd at Rancho Cotate HS woodshop. The guest speaker will be Jeff Dale, who is a legend in Sonoma County woodworking. Art then introduced tonight's speaker, Ken Napior, who makes antique reproductions.



Ken Napior

Ken Napior launched into his presentation, describing his career as a structural engineer. His firm helped to design the new SRJC garage. He considers himself an intermediate woodworker with the hope of getting better over time. Ken began with an overview of antique reproductions, and offered photos of various key points. Why build reproductions? If you appreciate fine furniture from years gone by, and would like to live with some of your own, the best way is to build your own reproductions. His main book resource is *The Fine Points of Furniture* by Albert Sack. It is highly recommended.

Proportions and craftsmanship are paramount, along with functionality. Reproductions challenge you to learn turning, carving, and finishing which may be out of your present experience and thus present growth potential for the woodworker. His initial ideas come from pictures in a book, and may sometimes require travel to see the actual piece in a museum.

After deciding upon a piece, he generates sketches

and builds mockups and lives with it for awhile before investing in finer lumber. Ken prefers 17th and 18th century American and English furniture, especially Chippendale, Queen Anne, and Shaker styles. Another resource for Ken has been a book written by Thomas Elf, who simplifies these older designs. These furniture makers were comparable to the the Sam Maloofs and James Krenovs of our day.

Queen Anne style preceded Chippendale and was considered feminine, while Chippendale attempted bolder, simpler lines. Of course, Shaker design set the standard for simplicity.

Ken briefly touched on the Golden Mean of proportion, which basically uses the ratio of 1 to 1.618. These proportions can be applied to the entire piece as well as individual components within the piece, such as the drawer dimensions.

There are reproduction craftsmen who attempt exact reproductions, even using the same hand tools, but Ken is not one of them. Ken believes in using the techniques that you are comfortable with: biscuits, pocket joinery, and whatever makes sense to you. After all, we can build and account for wood movement with materials that were not available two hundred years ago. However, you should stay true to the style and

not mix elements of different eras.

Ken uses modern materials like plywood and MDF where appropriate, but sticks to the original fine woods like cherry, walnut, and mahogany instead of oak or maple. He also uses modern adhesives, and feels no allegiance to hide glues. Grain patterns play a big part in



Photo by Michael Wallace



Making crown molding

Photo courtesy of Ken Napior

his selections of wood. He makes the moldings with a table saw and creative hand tooling and a router. Many times he creates a pattern from a picture in a book and creates a template from that. He also uses applied carvings to protect his previous work from the chisel. Case-work techniques depend on your skill level. Dovetail, box joint, your choice. *Fine Woodworking* magazine is a great resource for him in this regard and has many fine examples.

Ken likes to add additional details, especially secret compartments, and cock beading around drawers. Almost every piece of his furniture has a secret compartment. You can use a child proof lock that uses a magnet with great success. He has had great results using free Formica samples from his local cabinet shop as alignment shims to set his drawer gaps. Then he applies his cock beading.

Hardware is an essential component of period pieces. He prefers cast brass pulls and reinforcements from Horton Brass in Connecticut. Butt hinges are the usual style that he uses. Yes, he clocks his hinge screws.

Ken ended the night with a slide show quiz of various furniture pieces, and we gave our votes of good, better, and best. We all started slow, as most of us did in school, but revved up fast and woke up to the challenge. Thanks to Ken for an enlightening presentation.



Claro Walnut Platter by Victor Larson



Segmented Flower Bowl by Alan Brickman

Photos by Tyler Chartier



Petaluma Pecker Series-Black Bird by Don Ajello

Scraper in a Shoebox

by Bob Roudman



Some years ago, I found a decent used Stanley #12 veneer scraper. This tool is designed for larger surfaces such as veneered table tops. The sole has a much larger surface area than the Stanley #80, and is more likely to maintain surface flatness and is possibly less likely to dig in. As a novice woodworker, the appeal to me at the time was the look of the #12 tool. With a

rosewood handle and brass adjustment nuts, it needed to come home with me. I knew nothing about scrapers, so I proceeded to read up. With just a bit of newfound knowledge, I set about sharpening the blade of the #12. The blade was not the original but it seemed adequate, not too soft or so hard that a burr could not be turned. At the time, I really did not check to see if the back of the blade was dead flat and I did not polish the bevel. The blade bevel was, however, ground to 45 degrees, which was correct for an “adjustable blade angle” type scraper. Well, I tried it out with mixed results. Considering my lack of knowledge, the scraper did a passable job, but it was hard on the hands and wrists. To prevent blade chatter, one needs to keep pressure on the toe end by rotating hand and wrist while grasping the rosewood handle. It was a bit uncomfortable after awhile. I would use the #12 occasionally, but it was not my “turn-to scraper,” certainly not after I found a nice Stanley #112 scraper plane.

The #12 sat for a long while until I read an article by Monroe Robinson that put it back into harness. In the article, (*Fine Woodworking* magazine, #123, March/April 1997, pages 82-85), titled, “Cabinet Scrapers,” Robinson discusses a variety of scrapers and scraper blade preparation and adjustments. The article is a very worthwhile read.

At the very end of the article, Robinson shows a photo of a #12½ scraper that is mounted to a framed wood sole that extends the sole of the #12 by a factor of 3. Robinson says that the longer sole “all but eliminates the chance of scraping through the veneer.”

Robinson used a #12½, and I have a #12. So what is the difference? The #12½ came with rosewood soles (which Robinson removed) screwed onto the base of the #12 casting. The rosewood actually has threaded brass inserts to hold the screws. However, the #12 itself does not come with these mounting holes in the sole. I took a long look at my #12, and while it was in pretty good shape mechanically, it was certainly not collector grade and so I proceeded to drill and tap holes in the sole (only slightly painful).



Working from Robinson’s comments and reference to the photo, I constructed the wooden scraper base seen here out of maple. The sole is about 5/16” thick;

any thicker and there could be a blade chatter issue. Since this was to be a bit of an experiment for me, I did not take great care in joinery or in carving the handle and knob. I plan to redo the unit again, showing more attention to craftsmanship. The blade itself was replaced with a thicker Ron Hock #12/#112 blade. The extra thickness and quality of the Hock blade can make



a big difference in performance. Using the #12 in its “Shoe Box” (this extended wood body reminded me of a shoebox) with the tote and toe knob makes the #12 much easier to use, with much less fatigue.

The wood base is about 15” by 4¼” wide. The sides are about 2½” high. The tote is copied after a standard Stanley profile. I drilled and tapped the #12 rather than placing brass inserts into the wood base. I used ¼-20 flat head screws, but the brass inserts in the base might be a good idea. I did need to remove the pin that secures the blade-adjusting rod. I then replaced the pin once the #12 was placed into the base. The base was glued without real joinery work. I have heard of one person who made the base with ¾” stock, but I did not see a photo. I suspect the #12 may have been “mortised” into the ¾” stock.

An initial set of about 5 degrees is a good starting point for the blade angle. Another way to determine a suitable angle to use the #12 blade as you would use a card scraper, finding the angle where you obtain the best

shaving. Note this “sweet angle” by eye, then set the blade by using the adjustment nuts to that same approximate angle.

Usually one can find a good deal on less than mint condition #12 or #12½ scrapers on tool bidding websites.

Monroe Robinson, a professional woodworker and instructor, states that (the extended body scraper) “works so well I reach for it to this day.”

For more on scrapers and their preparation, there are many great articles in *Fine Woodworking* magazine and on the net. For more on the Stanley #12 see: <http://www.supertool.com/StanleyBG/stan3.htm>,

Also of possible interest: http://swingleydev.com/archive/get.php?message_id=99766



Photos used in this article are by Jose Cuervo.



Morning Glory Cabinet by Thomas Stockton



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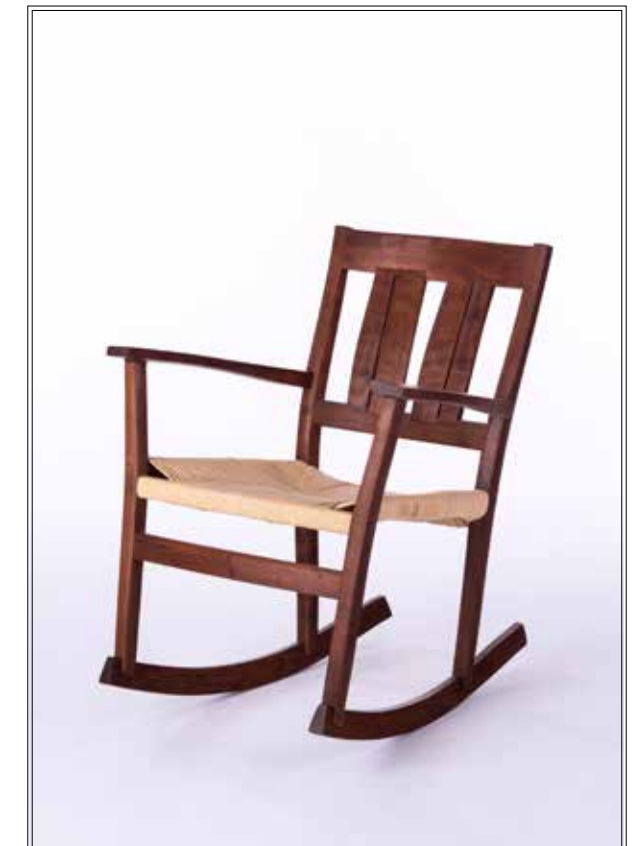
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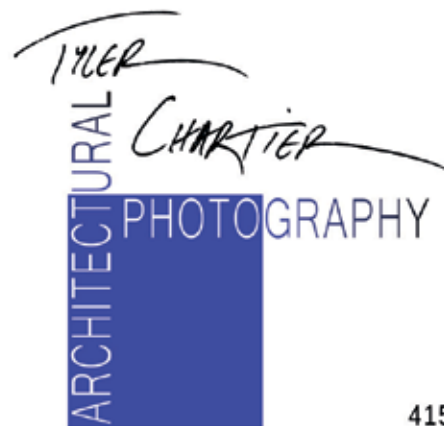


Table de Fleur by Richard Babbitt

Photos by Tyler Chartier



Low -back Rocker by Joshua Smith



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Wood Forum is the monthly newsletter of the Sonoma County Woodworkers Association. Please feel free to submit articles and photographs for inclusion in the publication. You can send your submissions to the Wood Forum Editor at SCWAEditor@gmail.com. Advertisements are also accepted with a per-entry cost of \$5 per column inch.

Membership Application

I would like to join the SCWA to meet other people interested in the craft, the art and the business of fine woodworking. Enclosed is my check in the amount of \$35 for the annual dues. I understand that this fee entitles me to attend monthly meetings and to receive the Wood Forum newsletter by email or via the SCWA's website.

I am enclosing an additional \$15 to receive the Forum by regular mail.

Name _____ Email _____

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Please send check and completed application to:

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