FURNITURE DESIGN MARQUETRY VENEERING CARVING MILLWORK

# WOOD FORUM

Newsletter of the Sonoma County Woodworkers Association

Volume 41, Issue 3 June 2021

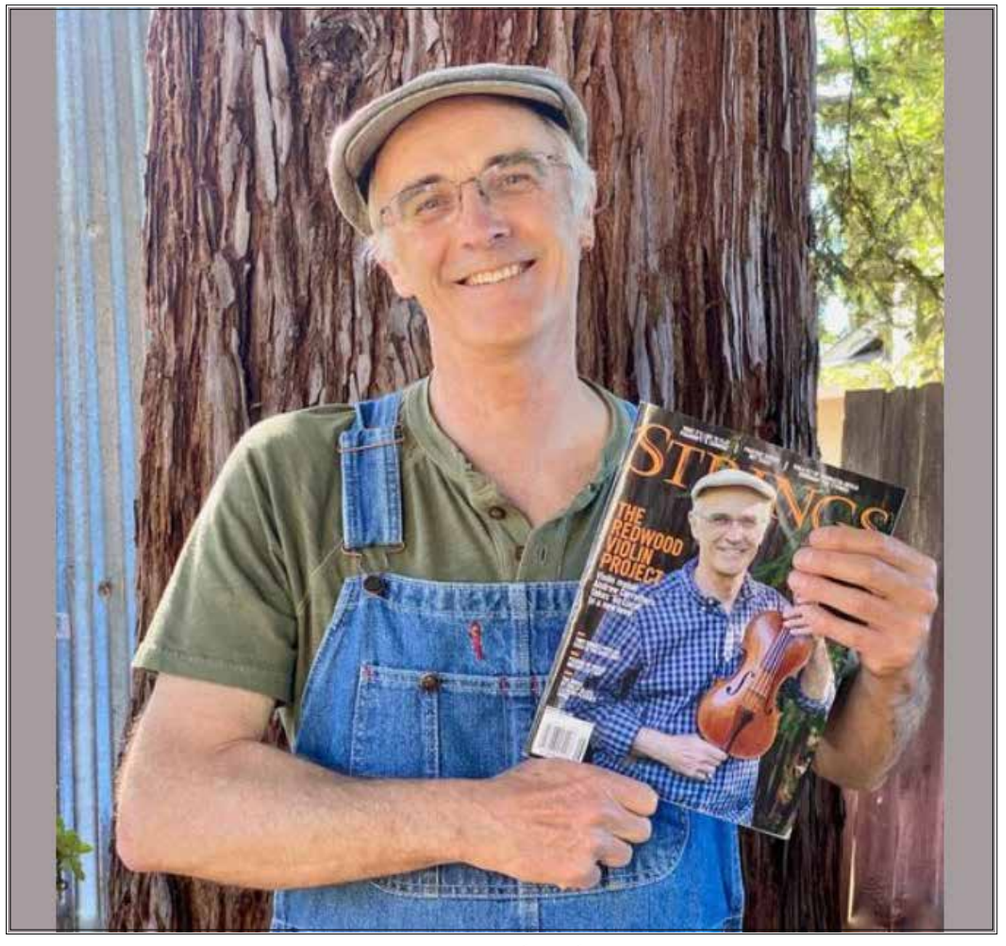
# Music to the Ears

Show Chair Don Jereb has made it official: ***Artistry in Wood 2021*** is back on track, live and in-person. It is scheduled to open November 12, 2021 and run through January 9, 2022.

This, our 33rd annual show, is again being hosted by the Museum of Sonoma County in Santa Rosa, this time in the main gallery of the Art Museum building (the History Museum building is undergoing restoration). The display of our work in this venue is exciting and top-notch!

We are implementing an on-line entry form and entry fee payment system through our Wild Apricot Website. This will be active on our website hopefully by early September, and will greatly reduce the tedious administrative work and record keeping for the show organizers.

Entry submission day at the Museum is tentatively Thursday, November 4th.




www.sonomawoodworkers.com

We will have the same categories as in our last show: Furniture, Turning, Art, Small Boxes, and Miscellany.

Our Judge search has begun, and if any members have suggestions, please notify us.

Our friend Andrew Carruthers has a well-earned smile on his face these days. He has finished his epic project of a violin built from materials sourced exclusively from Sonoma County. You can get all the details on the website:

https://theredwoodviolin.org/

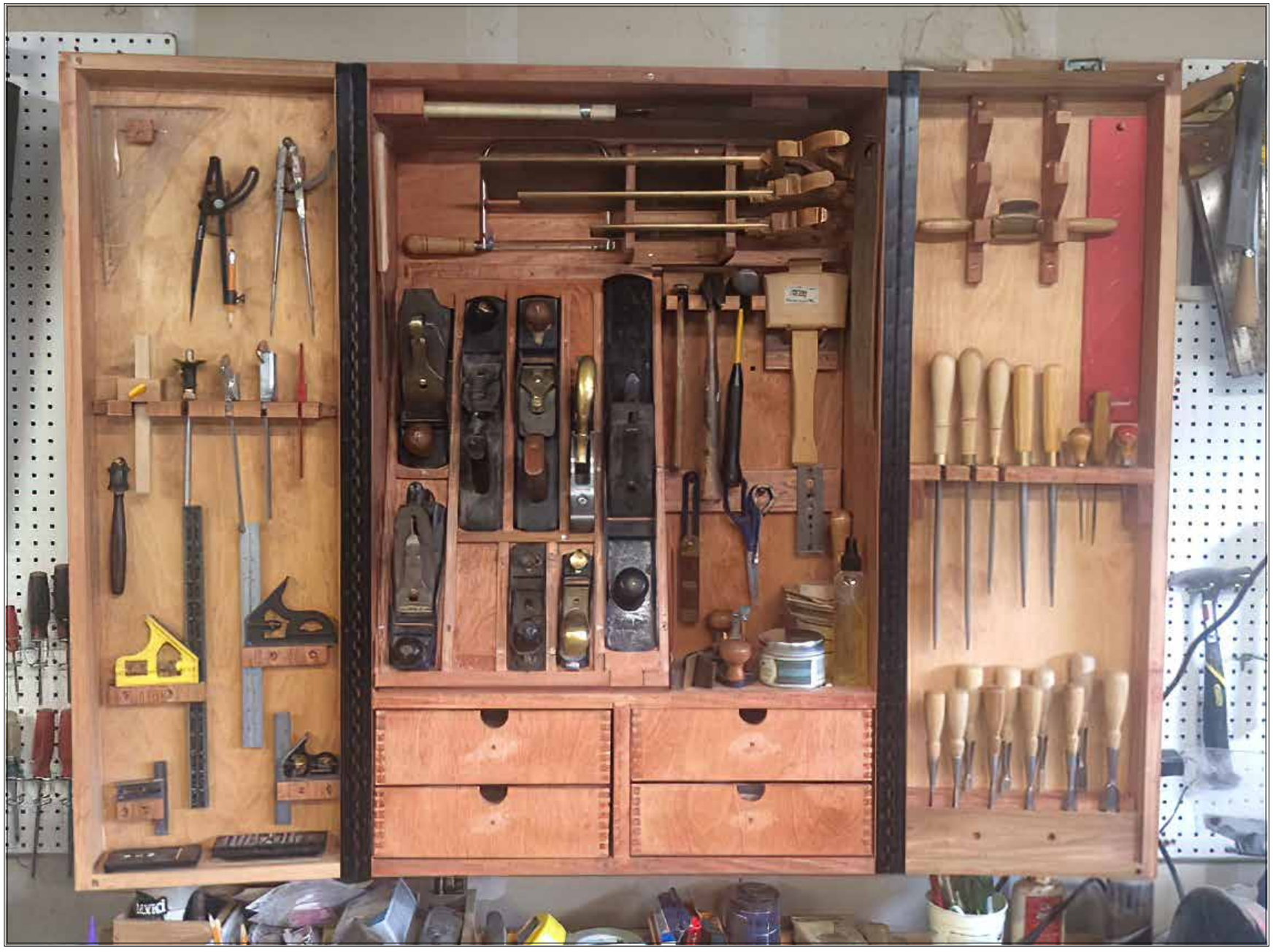
# Some Recent Projects

by Joe Scannell

The April 2021 SCWA meeting, once again held virtually through the magic of Zoom, was well-attended and interesting.

**Frank Ertel** started things off by telling us about a tool cabinet he recently built for his shop. After building a large and sturdy bench last year (see the July 2020 edition of the ***Wood Forum***), Frank decided it was time to stop searching for tools and get them all in one place. The result is this handsome cabinet built of poplar, baltic birch ply, and walnut trim. The box measures 42" high x 28" wide x 13.5" deep. The doors are mounted on piano hinges, and open to 56" width. Frank noted that he liked working with the baltic birch in the 5x5 format, as it's much easier to handle than the usual 4x8 sheet size. He finished the cabinet with Danish oil and lacquer.

Inside, the cabinet is a picture of organization. Four drawers hold sharpening stones, jigs, and other small items. While the cabinet is really just a simple box, Frank found an innovative way to store his hand planes by borrowing an idea from Christian Becksvoort of ***Fine Woodworking*** magazine. The till, customized to fit his collection, is mounted sloping forward, but it's hinged at the top. This allows the entire till to be raised up without removing the planes, giving access to the otherwise wasted space behind it. More storage!



The left door holds his measuring and marking tools, and the right holds his chisels and similar hand tools. The main cavity in the box is home to his saws, hammers, mallets, and of course that plane till. Frank said the bulk of his time was spent designing the various tool holders. They are all screwed in place, so they can be moved or replaced in the future if the need arises. Another clever idea was the mount for his Japanese ryoba. The handle is housed in a small box, and the blade is held to the ceiling of the cabinet with a rare earth magnet.

In addition to all of this work, Frank has been busy restoring old tools, including some of his grandfather's planes.

**Larry Stroud** began sharing his shop with Derek Taylor, a graduate of the Krenov School, in 2018. They spent 2019 upgrading the shop, fitting the jointer and planer with spiral heads and tuning up the bandsaws and tablesaw. They modernized the lighting in the shop, made new sleds, and generally improved the whole workplace. Then along came COVID. This new reality made sharing the shop difficult, to say the least. Larry is 76, Derek is 34. So they alternated projects, with only one of them in the shop at a time. Not ideal, but they made the best of things.

Derek began considering other options, and has now decided to move to Reno, where real estate is less expensive than Sonoma County, and he plans to raise a family.

Larry has a client with a yoga meditation room who wanted a small cabinet with an altar on it. He sketched several variations in TurboCAD 2020, and presented them to the client. He already had several Asian-style leg templates, so some of the job would be simplified.

He used rift sawn cherry and flat commercially-veneered panels. The legs and bottom aprons were joined with Dominoes, and the curved top was attached with dowels. He used figured koa for the pulls. The whole project took about one month. He chose shellac and wax as his finish, except for the top, which received polyurethane.

He made a special shooting board with spring-loaded clamps to edge the panels, using a downcut router bit fitted with a bearing. He was able to do two sheets at a time, and did an edge in about 30 seconds.

He made the pulls using his Multirouter. The front edge is eased with a round-over bit, and the pulls are attached with 3/32" loose tenons, the mortises for which were also cut with the Multirouter.

He used rare earth magnets embedded in the doors and in the adjoining framework to attract each other when the door is a bit less than 1" from closing; the last 3/4" is a firm pull, and the door closes nicely against leather pads.

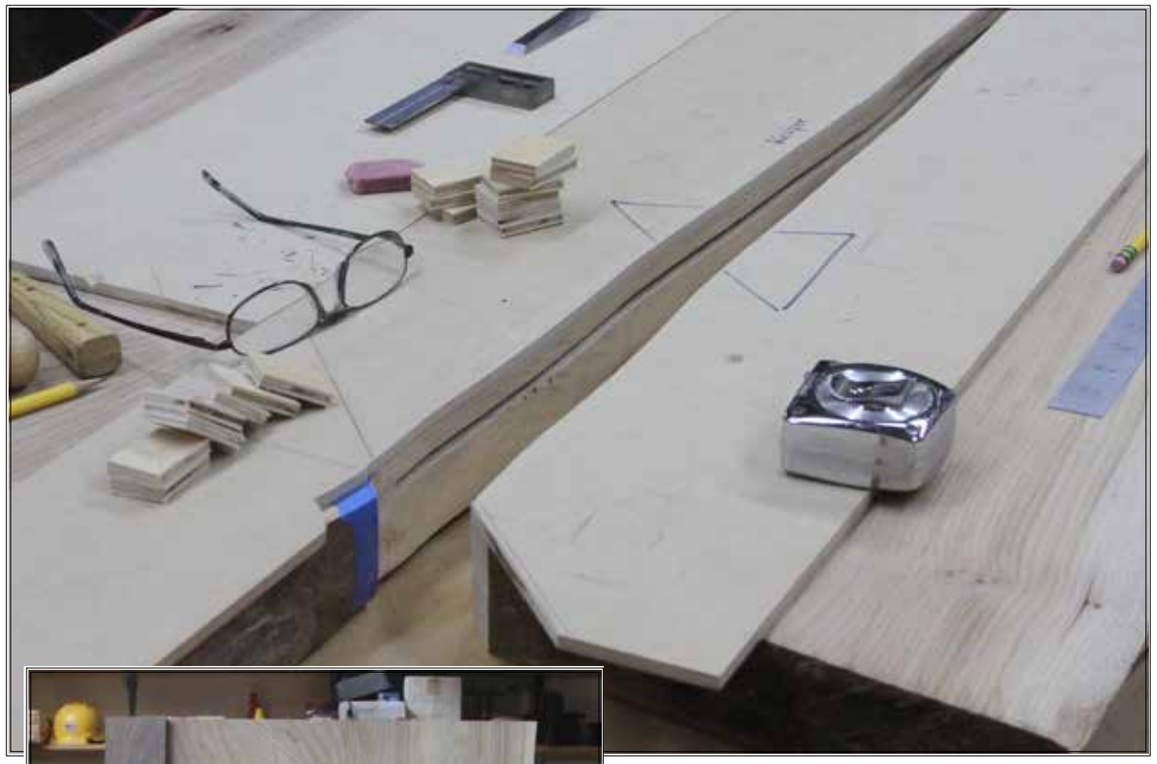
The door and drawer fronts are veneered, and the drawers are dovetailed. Both are finished with cock beading.

**Dave Fleisig** was inspired by an article in ***Woodturner*** magazine by Dennis Belcher, in which he describes the process of making a functional vase from a board.

Dave began with pine shelving from Home Depot. The process is to build a rectangular box to enclose a glass vase 7.5” high x 2” in diameter. His design was 10” high overall.

He inserted lacewood disks at the top and bottom and added a vertical stripe of lacewood and black veneer.

Dave made a second piece to fit around an 8” test tube, using maple staves with veneer between each stave. After turning, he textured alternating staves with a Dremel tool. The top and bottom accents are katalox.



**Joe Scannell** built a desk from an elm he harvested in Nicasio in 2013. The primary wood for all the parts came from that tree. The desk top is made from two 2" thick slabs that he joined in such a way that part of the desk is 21" deep (plus a retractable keyboard extension), and the remainder is 30" deep.

He joined the two slabs along a curved joint that follows the grain of the main slab. The two blend together so that the joint is hardly noticeable. This was achieved using an inlay router bit kit from Whiteside. He first created a 1/4" MDF template that mimics the curve of the grain. From this, he made two more templates, a left and a right, each offset from the master template. These two templates then were used to guide a bearing-guided edge trimming bit to joint the respective slabs. A little fine tuning with a chisel and a knife, and the fit was complete.

The two slabs were then joined with homemade Dominoes (1/4" plywood) arrayed along the joint line. The natural edge of both slabs is preserved and left unfinished. The top is finished with lacquer.

The drawer cabinet is also elm, finished with shellac over milk paint . The dovetailed drawers are mounted on Blum drawer glides, chosen because the bottom drawer in particular is a file drawer and expected to carry a lot of weight.

**Dominique Charmot** made this cabinet at the end of last year, using black acacia for the doors, and vertical grain pine for the rest. The legs and pulls are solid wenge. Most of the work involved veneering, and was done in a vacuum press. There are essentially no square angles in the piece, which kept things interesting.

Dominique also discussed a large Art Nouveau style showcase cabinet he was commissioned by his wife to build. They both like the natural, plant-like feeling of that style, and he spent a lot of time getting that feel "just right." The wood is cherry.

Unable to acquire bent glass for the curved panels in the display case, he made his own by bending acrylic Plexiglas in his oven. He made a mold of the correct curvature, and heated the oven to 200° and cut it to fit when it cooled. There are display lights in the top of the cabinet.

He also recently completed an armchair (seen below) in the same style. And in his spare time...

**John Rinehart** built a step stool for his wife. As he explained it, he built one for her back in the 80s that turned out to be so dangerous it would fall over if you simply looked at it. Thus, he felt he needed to redeem himself. He took the opportunity to get into curved work, which he'd been wanting to do. The project involved some template routing, and he built a trial version in poplar before using acacia for the final piece.

Because of the dimensions, the sides had to be made from two boards joined on edge. The sides of the stool are canted 10 degrees. As can be seen in the photo, there are several through-mortise and tenons employed in the stretchers. John made his own rosewood dowels using a dowel plate.

The April Zoom meeting concluded with some comments from our Show Chair Don Jereb. First of all, Don told us that Mike Finizio has stepped down from his position as Program Chair. Mike's life, with a busy shop and business, and a young family, simply didn't leave him enough time to keep all the balls in the air. In view of this, the SCWA is again looking for a member to take on this critical task.

We all enjoy the live in-person meetings, which will be resuming again soon. But of course the meetings are nothing without some interesting content, which usually entails a presentation by a guest speaker. There are plenty of topics which the membership would find interesting; what's needed is someone to line things up. It could even be a job shared by two (or more) members. What is certain is that our live meetings will need some life or they will quickly lose meaning. Will you help us out?

# The New Shearif in Town

by Joe Scannell

In recent years a new type of cutting head has become increasingly popular on jointers, planers, shapers, and combination machines. Manufactured by Byrd Tool in Kentucky, it is known as the Byrd Shelix, the name being a contraction of SHEar and heLIX, which is a pretty good description of the design of the tool. The cutters are 1/2" square "teeth" which are arranged helically around a cylindrical steel head, such that the cutting edge is skewed from the axis of rotation, which produces a shearing action that results in a much cleaner (and quieter) cut than conventional straight knives. This is especially true in difficult woods such as interlocked grain. In fact, I have found that most of the time it doesn't really matter which direction I feed a board through my jointer - with the grain or against it, the results are the same.


This versatility and finish quality don't come cheaply, however. The initial investment can be substantial, whether it's a new machine or a retrofit. But that cost is offset by the durability of the carbide cutters, and the fact that there are four cutting edges. So when one edge becomes dull or damaged, you can simply rotate it to a fresh edge and get back to work. This is the part I want to discuss here.

Each of the 62 segments on my machine is held in place by a snug tapered fit in the head, and by a single T20 Torx screw. These screws are incredibly strong, as they must be in a machine like this.

As I have said, these cutters last a long time. I bought my Hammer combo machine in 2014 and changed the cutters once a few years ago. Recently I recognized that I needed to change them again, so I got out my cordless driver, slipped in a T20 bit, and went to work removing the cutters. My plan was to remove them all, clean the head and the cutters, and put each back in with a new edge facing out. This is easy to keep  track of, because the cutters are etched with numerals identifying each side. If you sense a problem coming, here it is.

When I rotated the cutters a few years back, I used the same cordless driver to replace them in the head, getting them nice and tight. And as it turned out, too tight. Several of the screws were so tight I was unable to loosen them with my driver, and wound up breaking ***five*** Torx bits in the process. Thankfully, I did not strip any of the screw heads. After soaking the remaining screws in every "break free" lubricant I could lay my hands on, I managed to get all but one loose.

At this point I contacted Felder, the company I bought the machine from, in Toronto. I spoke with an engineer, who gave me my remaining options. One was to freeze the screw with CRC Freeze-Off, which proved ineffective. The other option, which sounded almost too ghastly to contemplate, was to strike the cutter with a cold chisel and break it apart. Naturally, I didn't want to damage the head, so this was definitely a last resort. As it turned out, it worked perfectly. The first whack sent a chip of carbide across the shop, and the second finished the job, splitting the cutter in two. The screw then came out effortlessly; the only thing holding it in there was the extreme tension I had applied with my driver drill.

The lesson learned? My new engineer friend informed me that I should only torque the screws to 5 Nm, and to ensure that, I needed a torque screwdriver which I could buy on their website for the princely sum of $85. Yikes! I would also need a new cutter and screw, also available from them in quantities of ten, also unabashedly priced.

Long story short, I got everything I needed and had my jointer/planer back in operation quickly. It's surprising how much having that machine out of service slowed down my workflow.

One other thing I learned during all this was that my 75-year-old arthritic wrists cannot produce 5 Nm of torque. The Felder screwdriver is pre-loaded to slip at that level of torque, preventing you from overtightening. After cranking on just a couple of screws, I was through for the day. So I made a tee handle for it, and I was back in business.

# Oh, one more thing...

The apparently indefatigable Dominique Charmot has one more project to share with us this month. This is a table he built for his daughter in recent weeks. Starting with a magnificent slab of black acacia from Ponderosa Millworks (https://ponderosamillworks.com/), he had it cut in half and surfaced by them. He then cut off the live edges (his daughter was not a fan of that look) and used numerous maple butterfly dovetails to bridge the larger gaps. He then applied aluminum adhesive tape over the gaps, and poured epoxy into the cracks from the bottom. He did this in three steps, to allow the epoxy to cure properly. It was a messy business, as one might imagine.

The next step was to surface the two slabs using a router sled with a 2" bit. He removed up to 1/8" of material to get everything flat. Then came the task of jointing the two inside edges for the final glue-up. He struggled unsuccessfully to do this on his 12" jointer, then tried his Festool track saw, but the results were again unacceptable. Finally, he turned to a smoothing plane and got just the joint he was seeking.

The legs were crafted first in Sketchup, then in maple, with acacia loose tenons. The legs are screwed to the top. The finish is diluted polyurethane, wiped off.

## Officers of the Association

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chairman | | Secretary | Lars Andersen |
| Program Chair | Michael Finizio | Guild Chair | Mark Tindley |
| Treasurer | Judith Garland | Show Chair | Don Jereb |
| Editor | Joe Scannell | Web Master | Rod Fraser |

***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 nominal cost for paid members.

# 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.

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____

City, Zip _____ Home Phone _____

Cell Phone _____ Work Phone _____

What can you do to help further the organizational goals of our volunteer-run association? Please tell us how you would like to help:

_____

_____

Please send check and completed application to:

Sonoma County Woodworkers Association, PO Box 4176, Santa Rosa, CA 95402