



# WOOD FORUM

Newsletter of the Sonoma County Woodworkers Association

Volume 44, Issue 1

January 2024

## The Makers Meeting

December 5, 2023

**Harvey Newman** opened the business meeting by conducting the election of the Association board for the coming year. All current officers have agreed to stand again, and **Chuck Root** was nominated to fill the vacant position of Program Chair. There being a quorum present, a vote was taken, and all positions were elected by unanimous vote.

Treasurer **Judi Garland** gave the annual report of our finances. The association has a balance of \$20,425.82 in the bank. We have 156 active members.

Guild Chair **Mark Tindley** gave a brief explanation of what the Guild is: an organization within the organization, composed of members who have contributed greatly to the Association over the years, and have demonstrated very high levels of craftsmanship. They gather together on the day following Show entry intake, and as a jury examine each entry to ensure that it satisfies the requirements of design and workmanship as specified in our bylaws.



**John Cobb** was also welcomed into the Guild. John is a woodturner par excellence, and an energetic Show organizer and woodturning demonstrator.

The third new Guild member is **Andrew Carruthers**, a violin/cello/viola maker, a frequent contributor to our organization, and the genius behind the Redwood Violin Project.

Chuck Root spoke next, appealing to the members for suggestions of possible speakers we could bring in for the coming year. Chuck mentioned that he already has **David Marks** lined up for a February presentation on vacuum-bag pressing and working with curved forms. He promised to include a discussion of the new zipper-bag system, which offers the hope of making the

whole process a lot easier. For more information and photos, please go to page 24 of this issue.

And with that, Show Chair **Don Jereb** switched the focus to the much-awaited Makers Meeting, which begins on the following page.

This year three new Guild members were named. **Rod Fraser**, who has kept our website running and those emails populating your Inbox since 2018, and has contributed many spectacular pieces of furniture to the *Artistry in Wood* show over the years.



**Michael Quesenbury** led off with a rundown on his surfboards, which he began making because he needed a board.

He makes them around a 5mm thick wood skeleton that is created from paper templates, cutting the pieces out by hand - no CNC involved. He covers the skeleton with wood recycled from various places in Sonoma County and sawn into thin, bendable strips. This process results in two half shells



which he then joins using an intermediate frame of solid wood. From there, he shapes the board using conventional hand and power tools. The final treatment varies from board to board. The livery of one board is painted in tribute to his shop companion, Coqui, a Dalmatian. Another board is decorated with numerous pressed dried flowers, collected around Santa Rosa. The final skin is fiberglass and epoxy, topped off with varnish.



*Photos by Debbie Wilson*



*Photo by José Cuervo*

**Patrick McDonnell** spoke about his large hand-carved table centerpiece of acacia. He carves his pieces wet, in order to get the large chunks of wood to dry without cracking. He uses an angle grinder for the initial shaping, followed by 9~12 months of air drying. Then he takes up the design again, refining the shape and giving the piece a sense of symmetry, which he likes. In addition, Patrick has a triangular shaped bowl, also of acacia, in the show.



*Photo by Debbie Wilson*



**David Marks** showed us the finished product of a piece he worked on at our monthly meeting back in August (see *Wood Forum*, October, 2023), where he turned the components of the threaded lid of the piece he calls *Voodoo Vessel*. The top is redwood burl, the threaded portions are African blackwood, and the base is poplar treated with a mysterious process he describes as "black art." He will be conducting a class in this particular black art in the coming year at the Two Rock School of Woodworking, so if you want to know more about the process, sign up while there are still openings.



*Photos by José Cuervo*



**John Cobb** spoke next, telling us about his hollow vessel he calls *Climate Change*. As John explained, the recent drought years greatly stressed the local alder trees, unfortunately requiring many to be removed. The disease and fungus that inhabited these trees created beautiful lines and colors in what is ordinarily a rather plain wood. The trick is to catch the decay at just the right time, before the damage is too severe. John jested that there was probably more CA glue than wood in this piece.



*Photo by José Cuervo*





The spotlight fell next on **Ralph Carlson's Best of Show** winner, which began life the way many of Ralph's creations do, as an odd, castoff piece of wood. But Ralph has an eye for the inner beauty, and on this one he coaxed it out for all to see. The rosewood doors evoke mystery and urge one to take the custom latches and see what's inside. The brass hinges are, of course, handmade by Ralph, the leaves mirroring the shape of the doors they support.

The cabinet body is mahogany with a cedar back. The cabinet

shape follows the lines of the doors, with the joints all mitered and pinned with, you guessed it, brass tubing of various diameters, placed randomly but strategically at varying angles to really secure each joint.

On Judgment Night, one of the judges spoke about how they had found themselves in prolonged deliberation over their Best of Show candidates, before finally settling on Ralph's cabinet. In a show filled with strong entries, the choice was not an easy one.

*Photos by José Cuervo*



**Scott Wynn** had two entries in the show, a cabinet he calls *Autumn Rain*, and an entry hall table that garnered an **Award of Excellence**. *Autumn Rain* is an open structure built in kumiko style, the various elements evocative of wind and rain. The doors open in an unexpected fashion, revealing the interior shelves. Some discussion went forth as to whether anything should be displayed inside, since the cabinet stood by itself as a magnificent display.

His entry hall table shows off some beautiful timber. The top is a piece of Pacific curly maple, fitted with walnut breadboard ends that at first glance seem fragile, until you realize the whole top is underpinned with slender but sturdy beams that support the structure from end to end.

*Photos by Debbie Wilson*





**Harvey Newman**, who led us through a steam bending demo during the summer of 2022, has been at it again, though this time it involved bent lamination. He created a "halo" for his wall-hung display shelf, then routed a channel on the inside of the curve using a small router. He packed this small channel with LED strip lights, then covered this with a very thin veneer of the same wood, so that the LEDs are inside the wood and shine through the veneer. The effect is very pleasant.

*Photo by Debbie Wilson*



If you remember the *Alien Hitchhiker* from the 2021 *Artistry in Wood* show, then you'll recognize the work of **David Bohl** this year. This large piece of redwood driftwood is meant to tease its meaning from the viewer. Entitled *The Struggle*, David rescued it from the surf in Mendocino and cleaned it up using only gouges and sandpaper - no power tools. When he started, he had no idea what the finished product would look like, and just followed the wood. It was a pleasant surprise.



Photo by Debbie Wilson



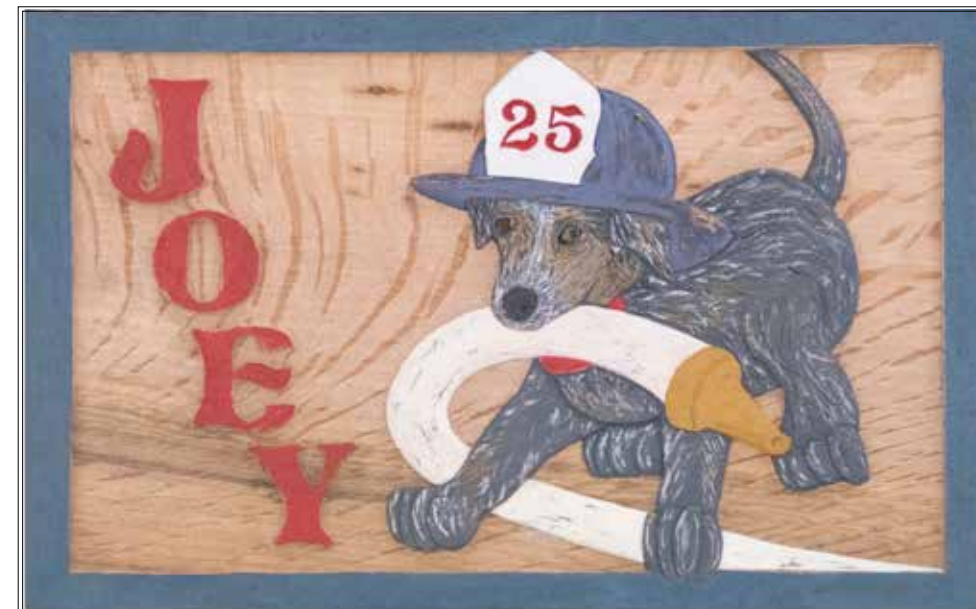


**Joe Scannell** had two children's footstool in this year's show, one for his grandson, Joey, and one for Don Jereb's granddaughter, Zoe. He's been making these for many years, starting 40 years ago. They have evolved, with the last three being embellished with milk paint, which he feels adds a lot.

Zoe's stool utilizes the name-in-blocks motif he has used before, but this time they are painted in the colors of the Brazilian flag, whence Zoe's mother hails. And one of the blocks is decorated with a honeybee; Zoe's grandmother is a famous beekeeper. The wood is walnut; the stretcher is apple wood, from his tree.

The other stool belongs to Joe's grandson, the fourth Joe Scannell in the family. The other three are all firefighters, and Joey's mother is in the business as well, so the theme seemed appropriate. The dog is Joe's four-legged family member, Stella Luna, who, being a mini-Aussie, doesn't actually have a tail but looked naked without one. The number 25 on the helmet denotes Engine 25, where Joe spent much of his career. Stella, like many Aussies, has heterochromia (different

colored eyes), so it seemed only right to give this Stella one blue and one brown. These eyes were turned on a lathe, with ebony pupils. One has an iris of ipé, the other of privet dyed with chlorociboria extract (see *Wood Forum*, May 2019, page 3). The completed eyes were inserted from the back of the stool top, then carved down to expose them.



*Photos by José Cuervo*





**Steven Schwartz** showed us his *EbenFlow* guitar, which he describes as a small guitar with a big sound. The bookmatched back and the sides are of walnut he acquired in his Sonoma Valley neighborhood. The Alaska yellow cedar for the top was salvaged from a hot tub maker. The padauk fingerboard is embellished with pieces of jadeite; hence the name "Eben" which is Hebrew for stone. Other woods include manzanita, redwood burl, ebony, and wenge. The finish is French polish.

*Photo by Debbie Wilson*

**Kris Worden** started making boxes in 1995 when he acquired a truck load of scrap wood. He started out making traditional style bandsaw boxes, but found he didn't like all the endgrain showing, and the lids were always warping. So he began trying a different approach, using 1/4" thick layers to build up the blanks. As he puts it, he felt like the guy who invented plywood, and he was able to use really small scraps. By gluing up the scraps by alternating grain direction, he found he could achieve greater stability and introduce some interesting woods in the mix. The outside is still done on the bandsaw; the interior is shaped using a router. The tops are inlaid.



*Photos by José Cuervo*



*Photos by Linda Job*





**Steve Forrest** had three turned entries in the show this year, which he discussed with us. The first was this large oak burl, which was salvaged from a tree killed in the Tubbs fire in 2017. It laid on the ground for five years before being reincarnated.



The second entry Steve spoke about was this madrone bowl, which he finish turned before painting the outside with black milk paint, then put it back on the lathe off center and scored it with the flutes seen here.



The third turning was turned from a large piece of monkeypuzzle, which is native to Latin America but also grows in the Pacific northwest. It is a species known for growing branches in a ring around the trunk. Many people have wondered if the knots were inlaid; he did not manipulate the wood in any way, except to hollow it out and make it pretty.



*Photos by José Cuervo*



**Mike Sooley** also salvaged wood from the Tubbs fire. He took this manzanita burl and used a small butane torch to selectively ebonize the

turning. The beauty of the turned burl has been juxtaposed with the original burl surface for a stunning contrast. He calls the piece *Second Act*.

*Photo by José Cuervo*



**Leon Geisler** made a cherry jewelry box to match a chest of drawers, also cherry, that his wife bought from Scandinavian Design. She wanted a jewelry box to match.



*Photos by José Cuervo*



**Joe von Arx** had two entries in the show. This butterfly cabinet is meant to be hung on a wall. Joe started with an oddly shaped piece of wood, species unknown, possibly claro. It made him think of a butterfly, so he took it from there. The wings are actually hollow cabinets; the front surface of each wing rotates to the outside, revealing the interior cavity. The back wall of each cavity is further embellished with an inlaid butterfly. The inlay is actually about 3/8" thick, going all the way through the back.

Joe's second entry was a large freestanding jewelry case that was inspired by a piece of agate given to him. To appreciate the agate, it needed backlighting, which suggested a nightlight, which in turn suggested a bedroom cabinet. He cut an ellipse out of the agate, and the ellipse inspired the overall shape of the design. This seemed to demand a radial pattern for the front, which he decided to make with eucalyptus veneer.

Doing some research, he found an electronic timer that could be programmed with the time, date, day of the week, month, year, and the local Lat/Long. The result is that the light turns on and off automatically and respects daylight savings time.

The drawers are made from very old Douglas fir that he recycled from old doors he has collected over the last fifty years. The drawers are supported by undermount slides.

His original plan was for the side to be painted black in the Steinway tradition, but he encountered so much difficulty in achieving a flawless finish that he finally gave up and went for gilding, which came out very nice.

*Photos by Debbie Wilson*





**Rod Fraser** utilized offcuts from chairs he made for the show some years ago, to make the abstract sculpture (below) for use on his patio.

He also produced these two beautiful Maloof-inspired walnut stools for the show this year.



*Photo by José Cuervo*



*Photo by Debbie Wilson*



**Don Ajello** has been building his Petaluma Pecker Series for over thirty years. This one is the tallest of the lot and appropriately named *Wilt the Stilt*. It's made of lacewood, padauk, and silicon bronze which he casts in his studio.

*Photo by Debbie Wilson*



**Hugh Buttrum** had a couple of contributions to the show this year. The first is this collection of flat-top boxes in various species: black oak, osage orange, live oak, madrone burl, manzanita burl, and ebony.

The second entry is this stack of bowls, which, Hugh likes to remind anyone who will listen, was withdrawn from the last show due to overcrowding. He was not going to enter it this year, until it was pointed out to him that the museum was using it to advertise the 2023 show.

Asked to speak about the bowl collection, he could only bring himself to say, "I don't know what to tell you about them - they're bowls." Thanks, Hugh.



*Photos by José Cuervo*



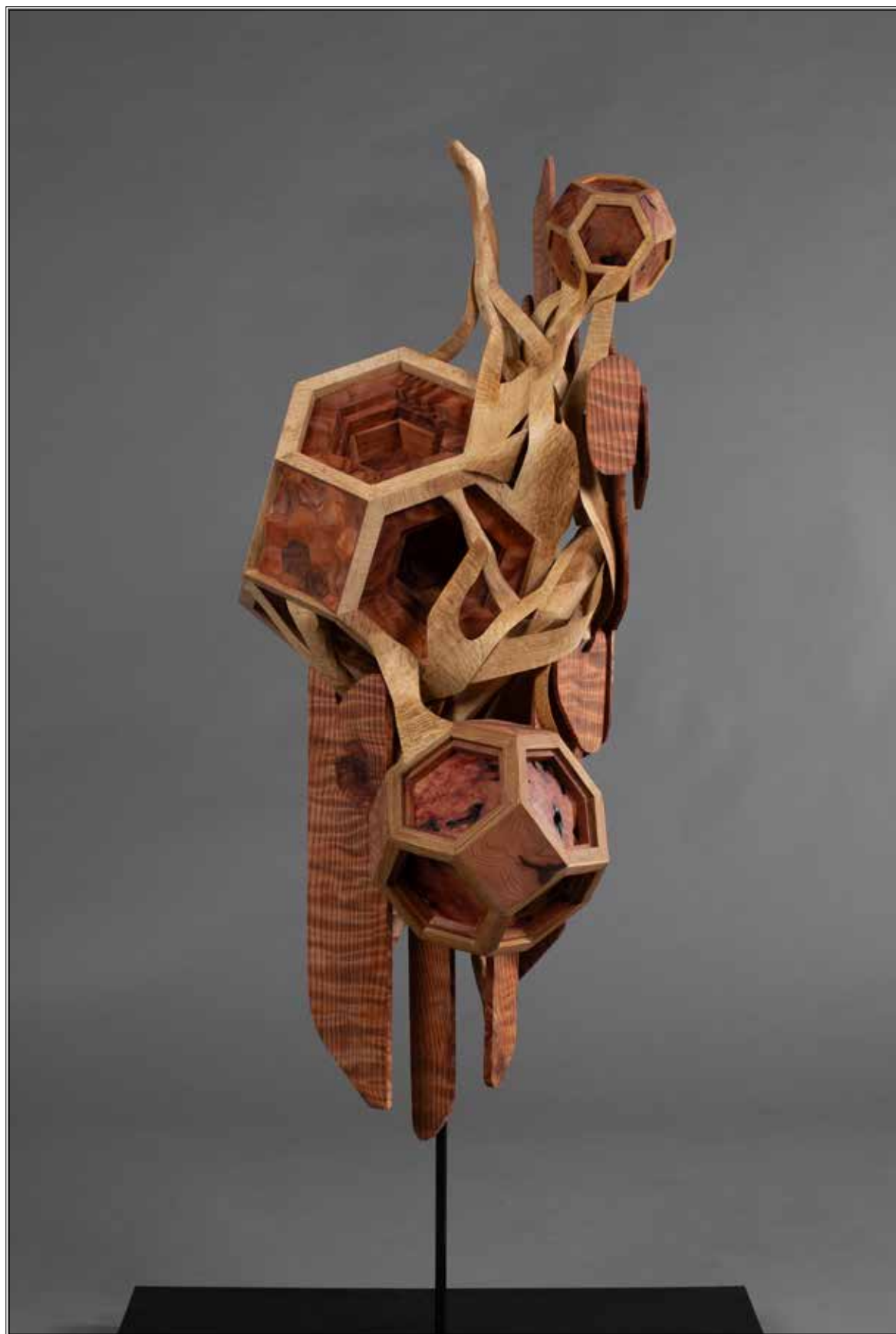


Photo by Debbie Wilson

**Anthony Demartini** described his piece (left) entitled *Blooming Dimensions* as a space time portal.

His other entry, *Tree 2.0*, in walnut, oak, and old growth redwood, is equally intriguing and one wonders what version 3.0 might bring.



Photo by José Cuervo





Two views of the ever-changing sculpture that is **Don Jereb's Möbius Mobile**. Steam bent cherry, walnut, and Alaskan yellow cedar.

*Whimsy Lamp* (right) is Don's finished project that we first saw under construction at our August 2023 meeting at Two Rock School of Woodworking (see *Wood Forum*, October, 2023). Steam bent pomelle sapele, ash, zebrawood, elm.



*Photos by Debbie Wilson*

**David Marks** spoke again, this time about his klismos inspired table in walnut (claro and eastern) and ebony. The project began life as an article for *Popular Woodworking*. We first saw this beauty back in March, 2023 (see *Wood Forum*, August 2023), when it was still under construction, and David led us through the finer points of tapered lamination. The name "klismos" refers to a style of luxury chair that developed in ancient Greece during the 5th century BCE, and was characterized by splayed tapered legs. David adapted this style in his table, and joined the legs to the turned top using dadoes in the top and matching notches in the legs.







**Andrew Carruthers** had three somewhat unusual violins in this year's show. Using traditional materials and traditional techniques, he managed to produce three instruments that are quite unique visually. Each is carved in a rough, organic pattern, and finished with traditional varnish, which he makes himself, but made special with the use of powdered pigments. Sadly, I am unable to provide more detail on this process, because my audio recording of the evening was of very poor quality.



I must apologize to any of the members who also contributed to the meeting but have not been mentioned here. Again, portions of my recording were totally useless, I'm sorry. If any of you would like to reiterate or clarify your part in the evening's dialog, please feel free to bring it to my attention.

Joe Scannell, editor





In his upcoming presentation, David Marks plans on a discussion of his methods of bentwood lamination using vacuum bags and curved forms.

The Treasure Chest seen here was built by David as part of his Woodworks (Season 5) educational series. It has a curved lid, which required a form to be designed and built to assemble the panel on. He will have that form at the presentation. He plans to do a dry clamping (not using glue) of the core material, which consists of several layers of 1/8" thick Italian bending poplar plywood, as he discusses his methods.

He will show his 30 mil extruded polyurethane Zipper bag and vacuum pump, which is relatively new technology from the Vacuum Pressing Systems Company owned by Darryl Keil in Maine.

He will have various platens (grooved substrates to aid in removing air) to show, as well as some vinyl bags that he uses for smaller projects. Breather mesh, another material that he uses, especially on curved work, will also be examined.



He will discuss the glues that he uses, and the value of using rigid glues for bentwood laminations and veneers. He will have 1/16" thick bandsawn veneers to demonstrate with, and describe his strategies for gluing.

David envisions an open Question and Answer format for the meeting, so bring your questions. Time permitting, he will discuss his techniques for cutting and gluing 1/16" thick veneer over a domed surface like his sculpture "Ocean" that won **Best of Art** at the *Artistry in Wood* Show back in 2021.



Last year our Chairman, Harvey Newman, initiated a new feature of SCWA membership, something called **SCWAwoodworkingGroups.io** webpage. Being a little slow in grasping this new stuff (and suspecting that many of you are as well), I have asked Harvey to give me a written outline of all this, the benefits, and how to get started.

- Joe Scannell

### **Groups.io for the Sonoma County Woodworking Association**

The URL to the page is:

<https://groups.io/g/SCWAwoodworking>

We're thrilled to unveil a new additional resource for our club. This platform will be enhancing our club experience and fostering deeper connections among us.

Groups.io isn't just another digital space; it's our dedicated platform for seamless communication, resource sharing, and community engagement. Here's what awaits you:

1. **Enhanced Connectivity:** Connect beyond our regular meetings. Engage in discussions, seek advice, and collaborate with fellow members at your convenience.
2. **Resource Repository:** With time you will be able to access a treasure trove of woodworking plans, tips, and invaluable resources shared by our community. It's a reservoir of knowledge at your fingertips.
3. **Strengthening Bonds:** While woodworking unites us, Groups.io strengthens our camaraderie.



Joining our Groups.io community is a simple process:

1. **Online Sign-Up:** Visit [SCWAwoodworking on Groups.io](https://groups.io/g/SCWAwoodworking) and click on "Join This Group." Follow the prompts to become a part of our digital woodworking haven.

2. **Need Assistance?** If you encounter any issues or require assistance with the sign-up process, feel free to reach out to Harvey Newman at [harvey.jay.newman@gmail.com](mailto:harvey.jay.newman@gmail.com). I will be more than happy to guide you through the joining process or any other questions you may have.

Let's take this exciting step together and delve deeper into the world of woodworking within our vibrant community on Groups.io! Join us as we connect, share, and learn in this digital space dedicated to our passion.

- Harvey Newman

## Officers of the Association

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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](mailto: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 wood-working. 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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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 4663, Santa Rosa, CA 95402