



# WOOD FORUM

Newsletter of the Sonoma County Woodworkers Association

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## November Meeting Annual Guild Presentation



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# December Meeting Notice

**Where:** Don Ajello/Linda Illsey  
570 Piezzi Rd.  
Santa Rosa, CA

**When:** Saturday, Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>, 3:00 PM

**What:** Annual SCWA Potluck

Welcome back to our annual potluck holiday party. It's time to hangout with your fellow woodworkers. Our hosts will be preparing the turkey, and you need to bring something to share. We always have enough desserts, so try and think of something to excite the palate before dessert is served. The SCWA will be providing water and soft drinks. Otherwise BYOB.

Piezzi Road is between Hall and Occidental Roads. The house is at the T intersection of Piezzi and Country Club Drive on the east side of the street. There are two large stone columns flanking the street entrance.

# Officers Meeting

*By Mike Burwen*

A meeting of the Officers was held on Tuesday, November 13 at 5:15 PM. Attending the meeting were Chairman Michael Wallace, Vice-Chairman Mike Burwen, Guild Chairman Larry Stroud, Program Chairman Art Hoffman, Secretary Bill Hartmann, Treasurer Jim Heimbach and Show Chairman Bill Taft.

The principal item for discussion was the budget for 2013. Because the SCWA has been losing money for the last several years, the consensus was to recommend the following to the Membership:

- Raise the annual dues by \$5
- Raise Show fees by an average of \$5/entry
- Reduce expenses and honorariums for speakers and judges

The officers agreed that these moves should lead to a balanced budget for 2013.

# Annual Meeting

*By Mike Burwen*

Chairman Michael Wallace called the Annual Meeting to order at 7:00 PM. The first order of business was to approve the ByLaws as published in the previous edition of the *Forum*. A motion to approve was made, seconded and approved by unanimous voice vote.

Bob Moyers suggested that the wording of Article IB2 be changed to read "To initiate education of the principles of fine woodworking by the presentation of lectures, seminars, discussions, workshops, and field trips; dissemination and exchange of information and data on woods and associated sound woodworking methods." This change will be considered for the next ByLaws revision.

The next item on the agenda was to set the annual dues for 2013. Although the officers recommended an increase to \$30, a motion was made to raise the amount to \$35. This motion was seconded and unanimously approved by voice vote.

One of the members suggested that the SCWA consider raising money and advertising the Association through the sale of logoed caps, t-shirts and similar items. This will be taken up by the 2013 officers.

Next, Treasurer Jim Heimbach presented a financial report. The key point was that, for 2012, there was a net loss of approximately \$1200. The Association is still solvent, however, and has \$4000 in the bank.

The final item on the agenda was the election of officers for 2013. The following people were elected by unanimous voice vote:

- Michael Burwen, Vice-chairperson
- Jim Heimbach, Treasurer
- Steve Thomas, Secretary
- Bill Taft, Show Chairperson
- Larry Stroud, Guild Chairperson
- Art Hoffman, Program Chairperson

The position of Chairperson is as yet unfilled. If anyone is interested in filling that position, please contact any officer.

# November Meeting

By Mike Burwen and Larry Stroud

Photos by Richard White

Chairman Wallace called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

The annual guild presentation was the focus for the regular meeting session. Guild Chairman Larry Stroud introduced the first presenter, Greg Zall, who gave a hands-on demonstration of the technique for fitting cabinetry to uneven walls which he described in his recent article, "Built-ins That Fit Like a Glove", in *Fine Woodworking* magazine (December 2012 issue).



**Greg Zall Demos Cabinet Fitting**

Using a mockup of a set of walls and a cabinet frame, he first built the toe-kick assembly (a four-sided box the height of the desired toe-kick space), leveled it with shims, and screwed it to the floor. This provided a level base for the cabinet, which is built so that its width is slightly less than the width of the opening into which it will be placed. At this stage the cabinet is built without the stiles fastened. He then set the stiles in place, vertical and parallel to their final position, and scribed the line of the wall with a compass, or compass-like scribing tool. Using a jigsaw he then cut along the scribed line on the stile, the back of which had been rabbeted, so that he was only cutting through  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch material. He then used a block plane to

finesse the edge. This procedure provided a tight, perfect fit of the stiles, which had been pre-fit to the cabinet with biscuits, to the walls.

To provide a template for fitting the top of the cabinet, he lay 4" wide strips of  $\frac{1}{8}$ " mdf along each of the sides and back wall of the opening, and then scribed a line on each strip for the corresponding wall. Using the jigsaw again he cut each piece along the scribed line, placed it against its corresponding wall, and then used hotmelt glue to attach them together, fixing their positions. The result was a stable three-sided template that is used to mark the sides and back of the top. To make the cutting and sanding easier, the back and sides of the top are rabbeted, as with the stiles, so that the cuts are made through  $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick material.

Since the top will usually be veneered, Greg recommends veneering the front edge of the cabinet top rather than using a strip of thick solid wood. He thinks it gives a much better looking finish to the cabinet. One of the members said that he gets a perfect match by cutting a 90-degree v-groove in the top piece with a CNC machine. If done right, the front edge will be formed by simply folding it at the groove, thereby providing a seamless grain match between the front edge and the top.

Guild Chairman Larry Stroud started the second session of the meeting with a slide presentation. His initial discussion focused on this year's *Artistry in Wood* show, the jury process of which had created a bit of controversy, and raised a number of interesting questions. At the heart of the storm was the fact that the Guild, bound by space constraints and increasing demands from the Museum, tried to strictly adhere to the guidelines put forth in the SCWA ByLaws, with the result that five or six pieces were not accepted into the show. This created a modicum of ill will among a few of our now, ex-members. Larry said the purpose of both his and David Marks' presentation (which followed) was to shed light on the jury process, and elucidate the guild's criteria.

Larry presented a summary of the guidelines spelled out in the by-laws. Basically, the goal is to maintain the concept and spirit of fine woodworking. Pieces should be built with structural integrity and based on sound woodworking principles, including allowance for wood movement, appropriate and well executed joinery, doors and drawers that fit well, and adequate surface preparation with well-executed finishes. Using photographs of pieces from this year's show he illustrated how these guidelines were applied in the jury process.

In order to provide a more in depth discussion of wood movement, Larry went on to give a brief tutorial on the factors which influence it: moisture content, relative humidity, grain orientation, and wood density. Since we cannot prevent wood from moving, even by applying finishes, we must design each piece with

potential wood movement in mind. That implies knowing the approximate moisture content of the wood you are working with, how much that species expands and contracts, and where the finished piece will ultimately reside, given the potentially vast relative humidity differences between locations such as Miami and Tucson.. Larry finished his presentation by discussing the practical application of these principles, including wood storage, considerations in milling to final size, and appropriate joinery selection. He discussed methods to allow for tabletop expansion, frame and panel joinery, cross grain joinery (wide tenons), and door and drawers fitting.

The third and final session was David Marks' presentation focused on surface preparation and finishing. In the hour or so he spent on the subject, he touched on many different topics including techniques, materials and tools. Kind of like drinking out of a fire hydrant!

David started his presentation with a favorite quote, "Denial is a river in Egypt", meaning that, when it comes to finishing, most people tend to lose patience with the process and accept less than perfect results, while claiming otherwise. He said that, in our show, the criterion is "Museum Quality." As an example, he went on to say that, in the manufacture of a \$25,000 guitar, more than half the cost is in the finishing. He then went on to present many "sound-byte" thoughts on the subjects of surface preparation and finishing. So many that this note-taker could not keep up! Here is what was captured:



**David Marks Talks Finishing**

### Heat

If you don't have heat, you cannot get a good surface finish. You need at least 75-degrees to have a finish material cure with clarity.

### Sanding Before the Finish is Applied

Sand to 320-grit. Going any further is a waste of time. David mentioned that even James Krenov, with whom he spent many hours for one of his TV shows, sometimes resorted to waving the odd piece of 320 back and forth over his hand planed surfaces! So don't feel bad about using sandpaper, and do whatever you need to do to get the job done.

### Using Card Scrapers

Card scrapers are terrific tools for preparing surfaces. The secret is to get a good polish on the edge and that the edge be a perfect 90-degrees to the sides. David uses waterstones to polish the edges. He holds the scraper in a jig (two blocks of UHMW plastic embedded with rare-earth magnets) that positions the edge at exactly 90-degrees to the stone.

### Make a Sandpaper Plane

Take a piece of Italian bending poplar and adhere sandpaper to it with double-face tape. You now have a flexible "sandpaper plane" that can be bent to fit convex and concave shapes.

### Dying Wood

Stains, dyes, and chemical treatments all work. David particularly likes metallic dyes which he says are colorfast and do not raise the grain.

### Surface Prep of Open-grained Woods

Before applying a surface finish to open grained woods, paste filler should be used after a colorant is applied. Spread the filler with a plastic Bondo scraper, then, after the filler has set tacky, rub off the excess with burlap rags. After it dries completely, seal the surface with shellac.

### Lacquer Finishes

The rule-of-thumb for applying lacquer is no more than three coats per day. After the final coat is applied, wait 2 weeks to 1 month before rubbing out the finish. Lacquer is getting harder to get, but is generally available through online sources. David said that one can find almost anything on Amazon.com. When rubbing out, David likes to use Micromesh which is available in grits up to 12,000, but David said 4,000 is good enough for the final wet sanding of the finish. He mentioned that, for small projects, spray cans of Krylon work very well.

### Oil-Varnish Finishes

David likes the Arm-R-Seal oil urethane finish from General Finishes. He says that it can produce a mirror finish. He applies a coat of Arm-a-Seal sealant, followed by multiple coats of Arm-a-Seal topcoat.

### Water-based Finishes

Water-based finishes work well, but do not provide any depth to a finish. They are completely clear.

### Gluing Veneer

David likes to use urea-formaldehyde catalyzed resin glue for adhering veneer to a substrate. He says it provides sufficient working time (about 45 minutes), is rigid when dry and that you will never feel the glue lines. The downsides are that it is expensive, has to be mixed with the catalyst and has a short shelf life, although one of the members volunteered that the shelf life can be extended up to 5 years by refrigeration.

### Sandpaper for Sanding Finishes

David likes a product made for the automotive industry called Meguiars Unigrit. He said it has a uniform grit pattern and is waterproof. It comes in 1000 – 3000 grits. He said that waterproof sandpaper can be cleared by soaking it in water to which a few drops of detergent has been added. However, this won't work for shellac-embedded paper. To clear shellac, he recommends using compressed air.

## Northwest Box Show

By Don Ajello

The 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Northwest Box and Container Show is on now and will run through December 30. Go to <http://www.nwoodgallery.com/> for more information, show hours, etc. The show is located at the Northwest Woodworkers Gallery, 2111 First Avenue, Seattle WA 98121.

Go to [http://www.nwoodgallery.com/content/33rd-annual-box-and-container-show?utm\\_source=Box+Show+opens+tomorrow!&utm\\_campaign=Box+Show+tomorrow+night&utm\\_medium=email](http://www.nwoodgallery.com/content/33rd-annual-box-and-container-show?utm_source=Box+Show+opens+tomorrow!&utm_campaign=Box+Show+tomorrow+night&utm_medium=email) to see pictures of pieces in the exhibit.

## Chairman's Notes

By Michael Wallace

This is my last column as Chairman. I want to thank the members for allowing me to serve in this capacity. I also want to thank the other officers for their efforts and contributions. We didn't always agree, but I think in the end we reached a suitable compromise.

We have had a great year. Our show was fantastic, and the programs we had were excellent. On the business side, we

were able to save about \$400 by eliminating the cost of mailing printed copies of the Forum..

Also, Mike Burwen was able to pull together a more comprehensive and logically correct Bylaws. While there are still elements that need improvement, We now have a much better set of governing documents.

Going forward, we have a serious hole in the Executive Board. No one stepped up to serve as Chairman. While I am sure normal business will go on as usual, we need a Chairperson to look forward and see where we should be heading. He or she sets the agenda for discussions and works within the organization to make sure things are moving along. Not having a Chairman will mean that little of that will be happening. I do believe that the Board is quite capable of working together, but we need to have someone at the top to lead. My plea is for someone to step up and take the reins.

I'll end with - thanks!

## Sorting Out Rosewood

By Mike Burwen

There are many species of the rosewood legume genus *Dalbergia*, but only a dozen or so are of interest to the woodworker. The most famous is Brazilian rosewood, *Dalbergia nigra*, followed by East Indian Rosewood, *Dalbergia latifolia*. Nigra comes from Brazil, while latifolia is native to Southeast Asia and Madagascar, although it is grown commercially in South America.

Another species, *Dalbergia sissoo*, is also sold as East Indian rosewood. Called *Shisham* in its native India and Iran, after teak it is the most widely planted commercial timber tree in India. Well-known to woodworkers who are familiar with exotics are such woods as African Blackwood, Cocobolo, Kingwood and Tulipwood. All are members of the genus *dalbergia* and are technically rosewoods. Unfortunately, the timber trade sells many woods bearing the name rosewood that have nothing to do with the real thing. An example is the Australian rainforest tree, Australian Rose Mahogany, which is neither mahogany nor rosewood.

Brazilian rosewood, once a staple of piano and Danish furniture makers, does not develop its beautiful grain pattern and color until the tree is about to die at around 200 years. Old growth trees are rare indeed, although stump wood from previously harvested trees is available. Stump wood has the color, but not the dimensional stability of trunk wood.

Rosewoods have long been in short supply due to overforestation and loss of habitat. Criminal syndicates operating mostly out of China have been logging and “laundering” illegal East Indian Rosewood, particularly from Madagascar where government control is weak. In 2009, the Gibson Guitar company was raided and wound up forfeiting illegallyobtained rosewood and paying a fine of \$350,000.

Because Brazilian Rosewood can be used in everything ranging from floors to xylophone keys, is beautiful to look at and smells nice, the demand is huge, resulting in its designation as an endangered species. Not only is the wood restricted from being imported or exported, but even finished products made of the wood may not cross international boundaries.



## Officers of the Association

Chairman	Michael Wallace	824-1013
Vice-chairman	Michael Burwen	658-2844
Treasurer	James Heimbach	355-9013
Secretary	Bill Hartman	696-0966
Program Director	Art Hoffman	542-9767
Guild Director	Larry Stroud	823-1775
Artistry in Wood	Bill Taft	794-8025
Librarian	Dennis Lashar	823-8471
Forum Editor	Michael Burwen	658-2844

## About the Association

The *Sonoma County Woodworkers Association* is a 32-year old association of more than 100 professional and amateur woodworkers. Monthly meetings are held at member's shops and other venues to share experiences, ideas and techniques, and to hear well-known woodworkers discuss their work. Each year, the Association sponsors the *Artistry in Wood* juried exhibit at the Sonoma County Museum at which members are invited to submit pieces. Annual dues of \$25 cover membership for one calendar year

*Wood Forum* is the monthly newsletter of the Sonoma County Woodworkers Association. Please feel free to submit articles, notices, photographs, announcements and comments for inclusion in the publication. Advertisements are accepted with a per-entry cost of \$5 per column inch. Submit your entries to:

Michael Burwen, Editor  
Email: [mike@pamg.com](mailto:mike@pamg.com)  
Phone: (707) 658-2844

# 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 2013 annual dues. I understand that this fee entitles me to attend monthly meetings and to receive the Wood Forum newsletter by email.

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Address 2 \_\_\_\_\_

City, Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Please send check and completed application to: Sonoma County Woodworkers Association, PO Box 4176, Santa Rosa, CA 95402

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