



# WOOD FORUM

Newsletter of the Sonoma County Woodworkers Association

[www.sonomawoodworkers.com](http://www.sonomawoodworkers.com)

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## August Meeting Artistry in Wood Exhibit – Judges Review



Dan Wacker and his Sideboard - Best in Show

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# September Meeting Notice

**Where:** Sonoma County Museum  
425 Seventh Street  
Santa Rosa CA

**When:** Thursday, September 6<sup>th</sup>

**What:** Debey Zito's Lecture at 6:00 PM to be followed by an SCWA meeting at 7:30 PM wherein Artistry in Wood exhibitors will comment on their work.

The September meeting is comprised of two separate events. First, Debey Zito is presenting the lecture; *Art Nouveau and Arts and Crafts Furniture: Designers and Elements of Design*, in the basement of the Museum. Second, the Members meeting, held in the Artistry in Wood exhibit hall on the second floor, will commence after the lecture.

The lecture is a Museum function with a nominal charge of \$10 for Museum Members and \$15 for non-Members. However, SCWA Members can get tickets for \$7.50 by going to [www.sonomacountymuseum.org/events](http://www.sonomacountymuseum.org/events), clicking on the Sept. 6 date and following the purchase instructions. SCWA guests must pay the Museum fee. Note that you can only get these SCWA tickets online.

This special event is collaboration between the Museum and the SCWA. We believe that bringing in a renowned artist like Debey in a venue sponsored by the Museum will help expose the general public to the work of SCWA Members. If we show strong support for events like this, we will be able to have more like them in the future.

Debey Zito is one of northern California's premier furniture makers, whose work is inspired by the American and European Arts-and-Crafts traditions. Debey has made furniture for the family room in Greene and Greene's Blacker House in Pasadena, choir benches for San Francisco's historic Swedenborgian Church, and a display cabinet for the lobby of Disney's Grand California Hotel, a showcase for Arts-and-Crafts style. There are many examples of her work on the East Coast in the homes of private clients. She has numerous magazine articles to her credit.

Debey Zito's work is infused with an historical awareness gained by years of study and by travel throughout this country and Europe, where she made pilgrimages to the sites of the architects and craftsmen who originated the Art

Nouveau and Arts-and-Crafts styles. Her lecture will provide a unique opportunity to learn about these styles.

Those attending only the SCWA September meeting should arrive at the museum at about 7:30 pm. Award certificates will be presented at this meeting and exhibitors will discuss their entries. The meeting will be an open forum format with questions welcomed. All members with work in this year's Show are encouraged to attend and talk about their work. Bill Taft will serve as moderator.

## A Thank-you Message

*By Bill Taft, 2012 Artistry in Wood Director*

Working on this year's Show has been an enjoyable and rewarding experience. All of the comments that I have received on the Show have been complementary. Everyone likes it. Most of the credit is due to the outstanding pieces. I congratulate all of you that entered your work in this year's show.

The Show would not be what it is without the help of the volunteers and the museum staff. A special thanks to Art Hofmann, Larry Stroud and Michael Wallace who helped for the entire period of preparation. This year's volunteer crew; Mike Burwen, Scott Clark, Jim Heimbach, David Hirsch, Dennis Lashar and Bob Moyer did a great job of preparing the exhibit space and were a big help setting up the exhibits. I also want to thank Museum Curator Eric Stanley for his invaluable help.

Thank-you to the Guild members who served on the jury for this year's Show, and special thanks to the judges, Roger Heitzman, Elliot Landes and Laura Mays, not only for their professionalism, but also for sharing their comments on the entries with us.

## Artistry in Wood DVD

Michael Wallace made a video of the judging night event wherein the judges gave their impressions and opinions of each of the pieces that were exhibited in this year's Artistry in Wood show. Although Michael says he is not to be compared to Martin Scorsese, he will make a copy of the video on DVD for any member that wants one at no cost. Contact Michael if you want one.

# August Meeting

By Art Hofmann

Our August meeting started promptly at 7 pm in the foyer of the Sonoma County Museum. Chairman Michael Wallace, Chairman, opened up the meeting and called for guest introductions. He then announced our next meeting, the details of which are given in the above article.

Michael then handed the meeting over to Bill Taft, the Show Chair, who thanked all of the people who helped with the exhibit. Bill then went on to introduce the judges:

- **Roger Heitzman**, an artisan and designer from Scotts Valley near Santa Cruz, who specializes in Contemporary, Art Deco and Art Nouveau furniture
- **Laura Mays**, the Director of the College of the Redwoods Fine Woodworking program in Ft. Bragg. She presented to SCWA earlier this year on her woodworking career here and in Ireland
- **Elliot Landes**, a wood turner from Winters, the retired owner of Penmakers, which makes wooden fountain pens.

The following notes reflect the judges' comments on the award winning pieces, as well as comments on a few of the pieces that did not win awards. As usual, the judging categories were Art, Turning, Furniture, and Miscellany.

First up is the Art category: At times the judge's discussions echoed those of the Guild during its jury process. For instance, David Hirsch's piece, a *Woodworker reacts to the NYT* struck judges at first as an art piece that was not woodwork, until they began to look more closely and noticed the intense amount of wood workmanship that went into this triptych. The wooden tiles that form the fractured Stars and Stripes are all canted on vertical rods that the maker routed into the subsurface. The surfaces of the right and left panels were chip carved and then milk painted. On the right hand panel the milk paint was rubbed and then doused with black to represent a layer of soot over a blue and red Chevron emblem. The red and blue colors were the panels unifying factor. Though they praised and appreciated the effort, the judges did not give this piece an award.

Scott Clark's pieces charmed the judges and everyone else). He was one of several makers who garnered two awards, these for his pyrographic works. The first went to his *Spirit Bear*. This piece demands close attention. At first glance, you think, OK, bear with salmon, and then the amazing detail and subtlety take over and you are drawn

further and further in. The curved horizon line for instance lends the flat surface endless depth.

Another award of excellence went to *Box Hen with Chicks* - pure whimsy and finely executed. Scott knows that details draw interest. His third entry, a large bowl in tan oak that had been turned green and left to dry into an almost boat shaped oval was skillfully decorated with maple leaves of various tones of brown that seemed almost one with the color of the wood. All in all, an impressive set of entries.

Oh, no, *Not Another Pecker!* But, yes, it's true! Another of Don Ajello's *Petaluma Pecker* series made the awards list as Best Art Piece. The judges commended it for its uniqueness, fine workmanship, the fusion of cast bronze and lacewood into a fantastical, bizarre and humorous container. Don is definitely a one-off!



**Petaluma Pecker by Don Aiello**

This year, as in years past, the show featured a variety of turnings, and thus the show committee usually selects a turner as one of the judges. The turner-judge was Elliot Landes, who was both articulate and clear about his subject. Elliot emphasized the importance of detail in turning that every element of the work including the signature has to be perfect. Turnings tend to be smaller than other pieces and thus face heightened criticism. He said he dislikes the look that special chucks designed to hold bottoms of turnings leave. He believes that the foot of each vessel should look appropriate to the piece.

Six awards went to turnings. Chuck Quibell won two awards. One was Best Turning for his *Fenestrated Black Walnut Bowl*, a large dark shallow bowl laced with the kinds of voids and ragged tears that are natural to the wood. The second was an Award of Excellence for his *Quest for the Perfect Bowl Shape*, a large almost white bowl of lodgepole pine that weighs next to nothing. And,

yes, the shape is exquisite. The following turnings also received Awards of Excellence: Hugh Buttram's *Ginkgo Urn*, which Elliot Landes praised for its shape and beautiful carving; Bob Nelson's *One Percenter*, a tall funnel shaped bowl of an utterly unique redwood burl received an Award of Excellence. Elliot liked the funnel shape with its large top and narrow base. He thought the piece worked well conceptually and he liked the foot. The title by the way has nothing to do with the current political use of that term, but refers of the rarity of the wood itself;



**Fenestrated Walnut Bowl by Chuck Quibell**

David Marks' *Japanese Maple Leaf Long Neck Vessel* merited an Award of Excellence with its burnished metallic surface of the bulb part of the vase going over seamlessly into the natural wood neck, a transition appreciated by both Elliot and Roger.

Dennis Lashar's blackwood *Keepsake Urn* drew praise for its form and workmanship, namely its skillfully executed chatter tool markings and surface embellished chip carving. It also received the Award of Excellence.



**Keepsake Urn  
by Dennis Lasher**

In the Furniture category, the judges resolved the tension between the Krenovians and All-The-Rest reasonably and amicably. Work coming from College of the Redwoods program is quiet, reserved, understated, and usually of high quality. There is an underlying esthetic to it, and the question is, has this become predictable? Or is this an issue at all? The judges thought not, and their selections in this area reflected their fairness and flexibility.

Michael Cullen's *Fly Table* found favor with the judges. It is an interesting root burl that he turned upside down so that the roots formed the legs. He then added a top, which had surface carving and milk paint. The piece was then rubbed out so that the lower layers showed through. The table looks odd, menacing and funny all at the same time. One has to admire the man's imagination and his eye. It received an Award of Excellence.



**Fly Table by Michael Cullen**

Craig Thibodeau's (San Diego), a regular contributor to our show won an Award of Excellence for his *Gladiola Blanket Chest*. Craig used some stripy tino for the background of the marquetry panel which features white gladiolas and their foliage. Together with the handsome panels, the execution of the rest of the chest, the overall design of the framing elements and legs, the contrasting interior and the flawless finish make it clear prize-winner. The piece is flawless and would fit perfectly into any home.

The boldness and originality of Grif Okie's *River Rock #2* table appealed to the judges so much that they gave it Best Furniture Award. Grif used curly bubinga for the top and gave it a shimmering finish. In this piece, Grif took hold of a strong concept -- a table top that represents the surface of a stream with rocks beneath it that emit shoots and reeds --

and saw it through to great effect. The top reads as a segment of flowing water, said Elliot Landes. Laura Mays loved the rocks and found them 'tactile.' It was the first time, Roger Heitzman said, that he had seen wood made into stones. Fun to see wood worked as big heavy chunks, said Elliott.

The rest of the day belonged to the College of the Redwoods. Laura Zahn is a new exhibitor in our show who lives in Los Angeles. Her refined wall-hung jewelry cabinet entitled *Madrona*, in madrone and redwood burl with a shellac and wax finish, won an Award of Excellence. The lack of a pull was the only detraction, but the rest of piece was so pleasing that it was considered award worthy. Laura's second award went to her *Table for Two* of jatoba and kwila with a varnish finish. To cite the judges, it is beautifully made, lovely, and shows subtle choices. Laura liked the doled edges and found that the whole piece exuded a sense of quiet.



**Madrona by Laura Zahn**

The prolific Greg Zall garnered two Awards of Excellence. The simply entitled *Chair* in black walnut with marquetry and a light green leather seat was universally admired as a favorite piece of the judges, who loved the overall design, the inlaid marquetry that wrapped around the top, and the carefully chamfered edges. Greg's second Award of Excellence went to his *Cremation Urn*, also in walnut. Again, the judges found the marquetry excellent, wrapping upward onto the top, and found the design very well thought out. The aromatic cedar on the inside gives off a wonderful smell.

The Best of Show award went to Dan Wacker for his *Sideboard* in sapele. Roger Heitzman was particularly impressed and deemed it a masterpiece. It has a dark overall look, the design is impeccable and the execution first rate. From the slightly splayed legs, to the compound

curved doors that comprise the front, to the carved pulls, *Sideboard* was admired, and deemed a tour-de-force in every respect. Dan Wacker did this work as a second year student at COR in Ft. Bragg. He currently lives in Chico. He and his piece are featured on the front cover of this issue of the *Forum*.

The meeting concluded with a round of applause for our judges. The membership broke into numerous small groups to talk and round out the evening.

**Editor's note:** There were 48 pieces exhibited in this year's show. Only a few could be printed in this edition of the *Forum*. To be as fair as possible, I selected the ones contained in this issue at random from the group of photos that I was furnished. I trust those left out are not insulted! Court Photographer Larry Stroud took pictures of every piece in the exhibit and these will be made available in the near future.

## 2012 Artistry in Wood Award Winners

The complete list of Award Winners is as follows:

**Best of Show:** Sideboard, Dan Wacker

**Best Piece – Furniture:** River Rock #2, Grif Oakie,

**Best Piece – Turning:** Walnut Bowl, Chuck Quibell

**Best Piece – Art:** Not Another Pecker, Don Aiello

### Awards of Excellence

- Keepsake Urn, Dennis Lasher
- Perfect Bowl, Chuck Quibble
- One Percenter, Robert Nelson
- Spirit Bear, Scott Clark
- Box Hen with Chicks, Scott Clark
- Ginkgo Urn, Hugh Buttrum
- Fly Table, Michael Cullen
- Gladiola Blanket Chest, Craig Thibadeau
- Madrona, Laura Zahn
- Table for Two, Laura Zahn
- Maple Leaf Vessel, David J. Marks
- Chair, Greg Zall
- Cremation Urn, Greg Zall

## A Judge's Tribute

The following note was received from one of our judges, Roger Heitzman. Members should read it:

*Gentlemen,*

*I want to extend my most sincere thanks to you both and the entire club for a most enjoyable afternoon and evening! It was a great opportunity to see some truly fine work and meet some great people. All that, a fabulous dinner and honorarium as well, and I returned home feeling it was a truly great experience. I wish you all well in your future endeavors and hope you continue to host this great show long into the future.*

*That Artistry in Wood enjoys such a good reputation is testament to your superb oversight, attention to detail and tremendous pool of talent to draw from, and I am honored you invited me to be a part of it.*

*Again, my thanks for a most memorable day,*

*Roger*

## Calendar

**Sept 6:** Debey Zito lecture plus *Artistry in Wood* Exhibit Discussion: See details in this *Forum* edition.

**October 2:** Patrick Stafford, Furniture Maker and Educator, Cotati Cottages

**November:** Guild Presentation, Details TBA

**December:** Annual Holiday Party, Place, Date and Time TBA

## From the Chairman

*By Michael Wallace*

My calendar says that today is the last Monday in August. That means only 3 more months until we're smack in the middle of the Christmas shopping frenzy! What's on your list to Santa this year?

Kidding aside, we are approaching our annual election cycle. This year we will vote on some changes to the By-Laws in the October meeting. There have been meetings and discussions among the current officers to discuss proposed changes. Mike Burwen has been leading the effort to review the old articles and add new ones to bring the Association more in line with the way it conducts its business.

The most important ByLaws change is the reorganization of the "Officer Corps." Some positions have been eliminated, while the duties and responsibilities of others have been maintained, and, in some cases, strengthened.

I urge all Members to consider taking a leadership role in the Association. We need a wider variety of opinions and experiences in the Corps, and I believe that you will find it both rewarding and educational. I'll be asking people to step up and run for a position in October.

This year's Artistry in Wood show was flat out amazing. All of the pieces exhibited were nothing short of fantastic. Bill Taft did his usual excellent job supported by the Guild and several volunteers who spackled, painted and set up the exhibits. Truly a team effort.

This year we gained several new members, in part because of the Show. Several are from outside the area, indicating that our reputation is growing beyond the counties of Sonoma, Lake and Mendocino. Gosh, we might even have some national attention soon! Apparently, *Fine Woodworking Magazine* is interested in publishing some of the photos from this year's exhibits. That would be a real feather in our collective caps!

Please come to the next meeting and the Debey Zito talk beforehand! The details are in the monthly announcement.

See you at the next meeting!

## 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:

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## 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

# 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 \$25 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 Web site.

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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