



WOOD FORUM

Newsletter of the Sonoma County Woodworkers Association

Volume 36, Issue 11

November 2016

In Search of Tonal Beauty

This month we will meet at Cotati Cottages to hear John Mello's presentation on the construction of acoustic guitars. John has been making and repairing guitars in Kensington for 43 years. He has a wide range of customers, including concert guitarists, who depend on him for custom guitars and their maintenance. Amateurs sing his praises as well, such as the one who wrote a thank you note saying how much he enjoys playing one of his guitars, and adds that his dog no longer leaves the room when he sits down to play. John writes: "My goals have remained constant - to produce concert guitars with a broad tonal palette and wide dynamic range that both project well and respond sensitively to the mature player's varied touch." He has the reputation of being an excellent presenter.

- Art Hofmann



Where: Cotati Cottages,
8050 Starr Court, Cotati

When: November 15, Tuesday, at 7 pm.

Cotati Cottages is a townhouse development located west of the H'wy 101 and H'wy 116 interchange. Take Highway 101 to Gravenstein Highway (116 West) exit. Head west in the direction of Sebastopol about ¼ mile to Alder Avenue. Turn right on Alder and then turn right on the first street, which is Ford Lane (Cotati Cottages sign). Proceed to the end of Ford Lane and park in the gravel parking spaces. The Clubhouse is the small building on the northeast corner of Ford Lane and Starr Court. There is limited parking near the clubhouse. If the gravel parking area is full, please park on the east side of Alder Avenue. The address is 8050 Starr Court, should you need it for a GPS.



Artistry in Wood 2016

People's Choice Award



Photo by Tyler Chartier

Jewelry / Lingerie Cabinet

by Joe Van Ark

An Evening with the Makers

by Art Hofmann

Bill Taft opened the meeting by thanking Scott Clark, who received a round of applause, and then Eric Stanley of the Sonoma County Museum, which drew more applause. There were announcements: Bill, Scott and Larry Stroud will guide a tour of the show for a museum audience on October 7th. The show closes on Sunday, and pieces must be picked up the next day, Monday, October 10th. Our next meeting is Tuesday, November 15, and is our annual meeting in which new Board Members will be elected/confirmed. Clyde Handford is looking for about four board feet of walnut for a box for his brother-in-law's ashes. Greg Zall promoted an upcoming class briefly. All year long, Bill said, he has been asking for volunteers for Board positions, with little response. Bill described the positions briefly and tried again to elicit nominations. Ultimately there were four volunteers, Don Jereb, Clyde Handford, Mark Tindley and Thomas Vogel for the positions. Bill then handed off to Scott.

Scott Clark said some words about the organization, supporting the idea of volunteering for the positions available. He thanked the helpers again: Kalia Kliban, Sam Brown, Carol Salvin, Don Jereb, Rod Fraser, and Bill Taft. A dozen or so makers were present, and Scott led the group through the show, with each maker speaking about his work.

John Cobb was first up, and after being presented with an *Award of Excellence*, he spoke about the hollowed turnings in which he specializes. He acquires wood from tree cutters and other sources, and selects carefully. The tree does the beautiful part. He goes for the smallest opening possible. The laws of physics apply, and problems arise. It is a pleasure to work with extraordinary wood, and shape is a balancing act. Can it be sold? He sells at Urban Hardwoods in San Francisco, among other places. After roughing the outside, he spreads medium thin super-glue over the

whole surface of spalted wood. Once, he called his wife to say he was attached to a turning. "How sweet!", she said, until he explained that his skin was literally stuck to the wood.



Alder Vessel by John Cobb

Bob Nelson told us that his *Three Little Bears*, a set of three bowls, came from the same gorgeous piece of redwood burl. Since that sort of thing doesn't come along very often, he decided to learn how to core the middle, using the McNaughton coring system. He roughed each out at 1.5 inches of thickness, and probably could have gone a lot thinner, he felt in retrospect. Deft, semi-gloss, was the finish used.



Three Little Bears by Robert Nelson

All photos used in this story are by Tyler Chartier unless otherwise noted



Reclaimed Galaxy by Lionel Murphy

Steve Forrest, a turner with three items in the show, has been trying to work with really simple forms. He finds wood, in this case slag wood from a dump. He's been working hard, he says, to disappear from the work and let the wood speak for itself. Of one of his entries, he said he really liked the wood and the corruption in it, the contrast between the smooth and the rough parts. He strives always for a simple organic form.



Spalted Maple Bowl by Steve Forrest

Lionel Murphy purchased the wood for the top of his *Reclaimed Galaxy* desk from Evan Shively. It was expensive, which meant he wanted to get the most out of it. He bookmatched the top, but not seamlessly, choosing to put laminates at the joint. The legs were made of steam bent oak, which he found to be too flexible, and reinforced these with laminated white oak. Everything is laminated and bent, lending the whole some structural rigidity. Lionel doesn't like straight lines in his work. To direct focus, the legs curve inward like the legs of an animal. There is a lot of work underneath the table, as the judges pointed out. He made use of a variety of hardwoods throughout; the primary wood for the top is bay laurel. Murphy's other entry, *Eye and the Serpent*, is made of red elm. It had a prominent knot that he wove into the overall scheme of the table with a narrative: Eve's angst-ridden hand receding into the primordial earth after her encounter with the serpent. The table legs are old growth redwood laminated into rings with other woods.

Bill Taft spoke about his *Butterfly Cabinet*, saying that he took inspiration from our recent meeting at Garry Knox Bennett's studio. He set out to make a butterfly table, but found difficulty in imagining the legs. He has always admired the cabinetry associated with the College of the Redwoods, and opted for a cabinet treatment instead. Some of the marquetry is quite thick, beyond the normal at any rate. He attached the marquetry to a backing board and proceeded to building the cabinet, in the end settling for three small drawers with two boxes.



Butterfly Cabinet by William Taft



Wall Cabinet by Don Jereb

Don Jereb got a hand for his *Award of Excellence* for his *Wall Cabinet*. Don participated in a class taught by Garrett Hack in Washington, and this cabinet is the culmination of a year's worth of work. The assignment was to build a cabinet of about one by one and a half feet. It is made of American cherry, and the door panel is old growth redwood, which, after re-sawing, curved rather uniformly on its own. Everything is hand planed; the interior is of Alaskan yellow cedar. The handles are of ebony and pink ivory; all in all a tremendous experience of designing and building, backtracking on mistakes and bringing it all to a successful conclusion.

Mark Tindley talked next about his pair of Greene and Greene-style tables, a commission from a client who came to him with a photo, saying he wanted them a bit wider than shown. There are only two woods involved, Honduras mahogany and ebony, the latter, remnants from his violin project. The mahogany is a very enjoyable wood to work with, cuts like butter, sands beautifully and planes easily. There were only two boards involved, thirty inches wide by sixteen feet in length. Mark solved the wide-shallow drawer problem by using a center runner, a detail that cost his client more, but led to some elegant design refinements, such as the drawer fronts flowing well in the cloud lifts. He used highly figured mahogany veneer to skin the inside of the drawers, which are lovely and worth a prolonged look. The drawer fronts are finger jointed and pinned with mahogany dowels for strength. There is some variance in the dimension of the ebony coverings, and lots of interesting details. Mark makes his own dowels, roughing them down with a machinist's die to approach finished size. There was a discussion about the handles, which led to another about something that Mark does not like in the Greene's furniture, which is the use of round-overs. He likes crisper looking lines generally. Mark took a lot of photos, and you can see them by visiting the SCWA website homepage.



(One of) Two Tables by Mark Tindley

Larry Stroud received the *Best Furniture Award* for his *Torii 2* chest of drawers topped with sliding doors in figured cherry, tino, and walnut. This piece had a predecessor that he made for a client, though the top treatment here is slightly different. He kept the curve of the top approximately similar, creating the curve with a router moving on a sled. He was pleased with how the patterns in the tino echoed the curve of the top. He made polyethylene runners instead of the traditional maple for the drawers, wanting to decrease friction, but cannot say he notices a marked difference. Whereas COR teaches not to finish the inside of drawers, he now prefers a shellac and wax finish. The pulls are of Japanese manufacture, to which he applied a brown patina, a process he perfected after making mistakes on the client piece preceding this one.



Torii 2 by Larry Stroud

Brian Cullen talked about his *Perseids* bowl, explaining how he backpacked years ago and witnessed a meteor shower. When he cut open this particular piece of burl it brought the old experience to mind. It was a piece of green big leaf maple. He rough-cut it thick and then finished it thin. Then it sat around the house for awhile until he decided to finish it in the manner of a guitar maker, applying aniline dye and coats of lacquer and lots of sanding. Five different colors were used, and under closer lighting it is reminiscent of a night sky with meteors. As you turn it there are all sorts of colors you can see: the final coating consists of about twenty coats of lacquer.



Hall Table by Rod Fraser

Rod Fraser discussed his *Hall Table* briefly. He is new to woodworking, he said. In response to a question as to how he achieved the fish shape in the top, he said he discovered an article that showed him how to marry curved elements with a single pattern applied first to one piece of wood and then to another.



Perseids by Brian Cullen



Sensei by David Marks

Joe Scannell received the *Best Art* award for one of his three footstools with carved tops. He has been making these for thirty-five years, he said. This year, he says he took the inspiration for the legs from a David Marks video, though not using the same technique. The legs have a coopered look to them that Joe achieved on his bandsaw. He split the legs and sandwiched the stretcher inside the four leg pieces, a much easier and ultimately more attractive way of doing it. For the carving, Joe roughed out the background with a Dremel router, and then turned to gouges and knives. For the teddy bear design, Joe set a stuffed teddy up on his desk along with blocks of wood, and moved things around until he found a composition he liked, then he drew it. For another of his entries, Joe asked the recipient's grandmother what the child's favorites animals were. One week it was lions; the next she called to say it was frogs. So Joe incorporated both into the design.

David Marks received a *Best of Show* plaque for his large turned vessel on a stand, entitled *Sensei*, which he graciously accepted. The project had its genesis years ago in a class that he took in Canada with a turner named Frank Sudal, who used very large boring bars, 7.5 ft. in length, 2.25" thick. David bought one in 2004 and put it to use after a maple tree crashed at a friend's home, where he salvaged the wood. The wood found its way into barrels of water in David's back yard. He began with a four hundred pound piece that he lifted with a chain hoist. He rough turned it to about an inch thickness, then boiled the wood, soaked it in alcohol, then dried it, weighing it all the time, and finally getting the wood down to 10 percent moisture content. The finished piece now weighs about twelve pounds.

He made a full scale drawing, because he had a concept of what he was after; essentially, the tonal scheme is dark and light, and he was thinking of a person, head and body, tapering, the light upper element, then supported on legs, not two, but three, the dark element. He also wanted some contrasting tones in the head element, which he achieved. For the head element, he used African blackwood, in which he chased threads. He chased the insert with threads as well, but the insert is cut and assembled from segments, also to insure stability. The whole assembly is very stable. The very top of the threaded lid is betel nut from Indonesia that has a pronounced contrasting grain. The supporting dark rings of the stand are interrupted with holly veneers. Lining things up made for a challenge and was quite the chore. The legs are a bent wood lamination, the tapered veneers running thick at the top and narrowing toward the bottom. To accomplish this, David built an appropriate sled for the bed of his sander. The whole project was very intensive and there are about a thousand hours of labor in the piece.



Francie's Footstool by Joseph Scannell

Thomas Vogel won an award for his *Andon Lanterns*. He told us that he has been a cabinet maker for twenty-five years, bought his first Japanese plane a year and a half ago, and that it has changed everything for him. He has since purchased Japanese finger planes, hollows, rounds, rabbets, and bevels, and around the same time discovered Sashimono, a Japanese style which shows no joinery and almost no end grain. Thomas considers this work to be fun, working on a small scale, taking risks that he never has taken before. One of his show entries was a box with blind mitered dovetails, which he achieved after initial attempts left him with a box of failures.

The lanterns, Scott assured us, were illuminated for the judges. The patterned lattice work took Tom about three years to figure out. The lanterns, he said, required about forty hours apiece to produce. Some patterns take much longer. The lattice work pattern is joined by six cuts in each center, and is held together with glue. He brought a sample and passed it around to the admiring onlookers; he does these on the table saw. He finally bought himself a used Unisaw, had the arbor remade, and acquired some good saw blades. His well tuned lunch-box style Dewalt planer now mills maple down really well. No kids, two cats, he does woodwork during the day at work, then comes home and works further on his own things in his garage shop.



Andon Lanterns by Thomas Vogel



Marquetry 1 (Heron) by Vince Van Dyke

Vince Van Dyke took a class from Greg Zall in marquetry, and his two entries were his first attempt in that field. In the two day class, Vince felt he didn't do very well on the first day, nor the second. He tried to slow down and things improved. He came home and laminated his first effort to a backer board. He had owned a scroll saw for several years; now he took it out of the box, put it together and did his next piece over the course of the following two weeks. He mounted each of them on stands. He won an *Award of Excellence* for his portrait of a heron in profile. He hasn't done any more marquetry since then; currently, his wife wants some crown molding at the house. More to follow.

Steve Forrest spoke a second time, now about his *Spalted Maple Bowl* (photo on page 3), which gave him problems while turning it. He persevered, however, with the result that a lady approached him on opening night who wanted to buy the bowl. This was incredible validation of his work, he said, and being part of the show has been an incredible experience for a novice woodworker.

Following Steve, John Cobb talked about his turned **Oak Vessel**, a piece made from wood salvaged from a tree that succumbed to the Sudden Oak Death disease. It had some great lines in it, but all at once started to flutter as it spun, a sign that it would soon fly apart. That was when he applied some stitches ala Jerry Kermode. It wasn't just an artistic move, it was by necessity. Not only did the piece survive, it turned out well.



Jewelry and Lingerie Cabinet (detail)

Photo by Jose Cuervo

Next, Joe Von Ark talked about his **Jewelry and Lingerie Cabinet** (see *People's Choice Award*, page 2), a commission that came about when the conversation with a woman over a glass of wine at a party turned to jewelry. The woman became a client. Serendipity. The woman was interested in a cabinet, but wanted to use specific wood, which Joe saw, inspected, and said he would use if he could have complete artistic freedom. If she liked the result, the price would be high, if not, he would keep the piece. She agreed to that bargain.

Joe is self taught, and feels that he has violated every woodworking rule in the book. The piece started with the front face, a piece of claro walnut veneer that is divided into numerous drawer fronts, larger at the bottom, smaller toward the top. After some adjustments, he applied a face frame. He then inlaid some pewter into the face frame. The "pewter" is

actually lead free solder that he inlaid into a groove using red marine epoxy. It must be scraped, not sanded, because it will bleed. The entire piece was built without a tape measure, instead using a story stick and a builder's level. The drawer slides are based on the NK system, where the bottoms are fitted to slide in the runners, and the slightly narrower sides create no friction whatsoever. There are plywood dust covers above and below. The drawers themselves are of Douglas fir treated with Watco, butt jointed and joined with dowels. The drawer bottoms are stable, with hardwood running elements rabbetted to 1/4" plywood. The cabinet's sides are of curly maple laminated to bending poplar plywood. To make every drawer delightful, each has a different divider system and a different color velvet liner. There is over fifteen square feet of jewelry display area. The story ends well. He showed it to his client and she loved it.



Alchemist's Vessel by David Marks

David Marks had two pieces in the show; next up was his **Alchemist's Vessel**, again one of his signature pieces, this one smaller. It received the **Best Turning** award. David began by explaining how he achieved the crackle blue finish on the inside. It is obtained from lapis lazuli used in Japan colors on a base coat of white-tinted shellac. He mixes the Japan color with naphtha. When you add naphtha to Ronan brand Japan paint, the pigments start to separate. Essentially it is like a resist technique, like mixing oil and water. The white background makes the dark blue Japan color jump out when the naphtha does its work.

The closed vessel shape is assembled from two sections. He turned the bottom in poplar. The upper part of the vessel is burl, joined to the bottom with a rabbet. He extolled the use of a center steady-rest in turning to minimize vibration. David paints the inside of the turning with a brush attached to a stick. The shellac stabilizes the inside because it acts as a vapor barrier. The outside is stabilized by the lacquer finish. David ended his description of his processes by saying that his extensive efforts were all part of a labor of love, and that by the time he was ninety he would have it all figured out.

Paul Marini was the final maker to speak. He made three items that he discussed, wood realizations on the theme of medieval weaponry. These are based on a painting, which when he passes it at home, look to him like the weapons are made of metal. This called for the glossy finish that he used. The first stage project was a dagger, *Close Quarters*. The second, *Hand to Hand*, is a sword. The guard took more time than the rest of the entire project. David Marks wanted a picture of Paul wielding the sword.

Paul says metal swords look artificial and cheap, and their prices are high, so he decided to make his own. He showed us a 1.25" ball-end plunge router bit, and explained the painstaking process of how he shaped the ebony and Douglas fir elements of the shaft components used in *In The Field*, a battle ax. The whole idea, he told us, was a winged battle ax, the wings like those of a dragon, flapping and fighting like hell. He started out in July of 2012 and on July 30th he suffered cardiac arrest in his gym. He recovered and vowed to give the completed piece to his friend, an EMT, who saved his life that day. Disregarding his problems, he knuckled down and went at it again. He recommends knowing bystander CPR. His friend deserved his best work, he explained, and that is what he tried to achieve. He thanked the group for letting him display his efforts. There was a warm round of applause, and with that the evening drew to a rapid conclusion.



In The Field by Paul Marini

SCWA Annual Meeting Notice

The November 15th meeting is our **Annual Meeting** for 2016. We begin with a business meeting that attends to the Association's business, including the election of officers. Nominations of candidates for office will be held before the voting, for any members wishing to be a candidate for office. There will also be a treasurer's report on our financial and membership positions. The Annual Meeting will precede the program presentation.

The Candidates for Officer Positions are:

Chairperson – Tom Vogel

Secretary – Lars Andersen

Treasurer – Judi Garland

Program Chairperson – Clyde Handford

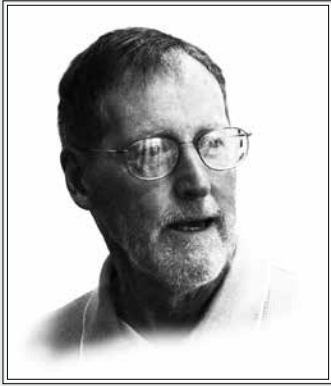
Show Chairperson – Don Jereb

Guild Chairperson – Mark Tindley

Newsletter Editor – Joe Scannell

Webmaster – Steve Greenberg





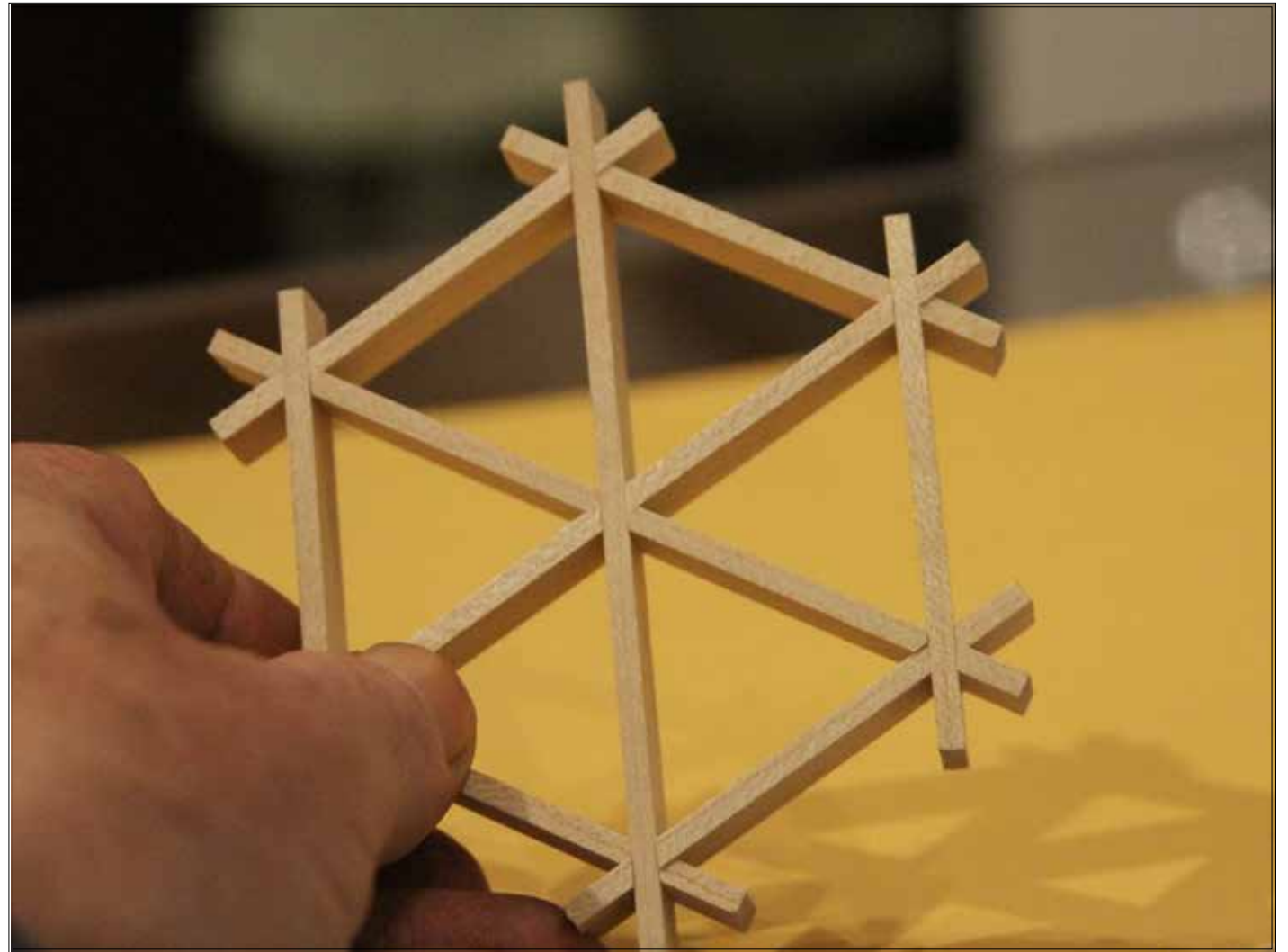
A Note from the Chairman

Bill Taft

Our Meeting with the Makers is one of my favorite meetings to attend and participate in. This meeting brings our members together to talk about their work and learn from other members. One of the best things about our *Artistry in Wood* Shows is that they are by and for our members. Not just the members showing their work, but all the members that get to share the display, either in person or by reading our *Wood Forum* articles. My thanks to Scott Clark and all the members that helped with this year's Show.

For this whole year I have been ending my 'Note' with a request for members to volunteer to be a candidate for one of the officer positions that are being vacated by a retiring officer. My persistence seems to have paid off; at the October meeting four members were nominated to fill the four open positions next year. This means that we will have a full slate of candidates running for election at the November Annual Meeting, and assures that the Association will have a full board of officers to take care of its activities.

Our November meeting is designated as our Annual Meeting. This is the meeting that starts with a business meeting that is used to take care of the Association's business, such as the election of officers. Nominations for candidates for office will be held before the voting for any members wishing to be a candidate for office. There will also be a treasurer's report on our financial and membership positions. This is an important meeting and I encourage you to attend it. You will get to meet the candidates and participate in the election of our officers. This issue of the *Wood Forum* and our web site have more information about the candidates and the program part of the meeting.



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Greg Zall's Marquetry classes, October 2016



Sunday morning on the way to Greg's shop



Learning at the feet of the master



Photos by Jose Cuervo



Officers of the Association

<u>Chairman</u>	Bill Taft	<u>Secretary</u>	Lars Andersen
<u>Program Chair</u>	Art Hofmann	<u>Guild Chair</u>	Larry Stroud
<u>Treasurer</u>	Judith Garland	<u>Show Chair</u>	Scott Clark
<u>Editor</u>	Joe Scannell	<u>Web Master</u>	Michael Wallace

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 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 _____

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