

Volume 36, Issue 2 February 2016

An All-Around California Woodworker

by Art Hofmann

Our February 2 meeting commences at 7 pm and features a presentation by Dugan Essick, a multifaceted woodworker from Grass Valley, CA. He began making things in wood as a young teenager. His first car was a 1946 Mercury Woody, which he disassembled and then replaced all the damaged wood. In college, he built his first classical guitar mostly with hand tools, and discovered fine furniture. During his time at San Francisco State, Art Carpenter taught a class in furniture design as a guest instructor, which opened his eyes and mind.

After college, Essick sold his work on the streets of Berkeley as a street artist and later in small galleries and craft fairs. Since then he has moved to Grass Valley, where he has an extensive shop. He has designed and built furniture, made cabinets, worked on boats, worked as a pattern maker, restored and remodeled homes, and done general construction as well. He also runs a school in his shop, which is located in an idyllic setting. As a teacher, he believes that the satisfaction of making things increases as one's skill level grows. In his presentation to us, Dugan intends to review his career.



Directions:

Tuesday, February 2, 2016 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 the 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, marked with a 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 require it for a GPS. Carrying a flashlight along wouldn't hurt.



Photo by Jose Cuervo

January Members Meeting

by Art Hofmann

Bill Taft, our new Chairman, (or 'newly recycled' out of his former post as treasurer) called the meeting to order shortly after 7 pm. Bill thanked Greg Zall, our host and presenter for the evening, and Don and Janet Naples for the use of their Healdsburg home for our annual holiday party. Bill then called for guests to identify themselves, which a number of people did. Thereupon he inquired as to how many people had received renewal notices, and pointed out the possibility of their paying their dues right on the spot, indicating the presence of Judi Garland, our new Treasurer. Lars Anderson having put himself forward as a potential Secretary of the Board, responsible for taking minutes at board meetings, it was time, therefore, for Bill Taft to call for the formality of electing him, which was accomplished in short order.

Art Hofmann announced that Dugan Essick, an all-around woodworker, who makes furniture in the California style, would be our presenter for the February meeting, to be held at Cotati Cottages.

Michael Wallace, our webmaster, asked for spare and excess wood that members might have around their shops for the new Montgomery High School wood shop program, which has no budget allocated for wood. Tools and tooling such as router bits would be very much appreciated as well.

Alan Bertozzi, a friend of Don Naples, showed us three plane blades in different stages of sharpening, the third a truly mirror finish. Don has offered to teach a class in sharpening, and a sign-up sheet was circulated among members to register their interest.

Art Hofmann then introduced Greg Zall, the evening's presenter. Greg began an excellent presentation by describing a commission that began about a year and a half ago to supply a cabinet for a Torah and decorate

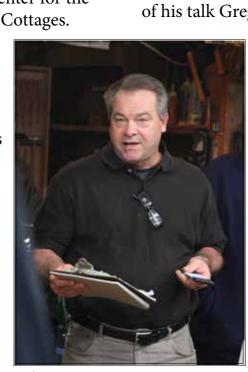
an entire sanctuary for a Jewish high school in Palo Alto. We saw a few slides of the project, the overall effect of which was enchanting. The room swims in light that is suffused by the outlines of a pomegranate tree and its branches, created by panels installed on the inside of the windows. The motif is a familiar one in Greg's decorative patterns: pomegranates have many seeds, like the Torah. The sacred scroll, too, is held in an imposing, pomegranate adorned cabinet of Greg's making. An ordinary room was thus turned into a sacred space.

Greg and his partner Mark Tindley did the entire room: built-in cabinets, reception desk, etc., but for purposes of his talk Greg said he would

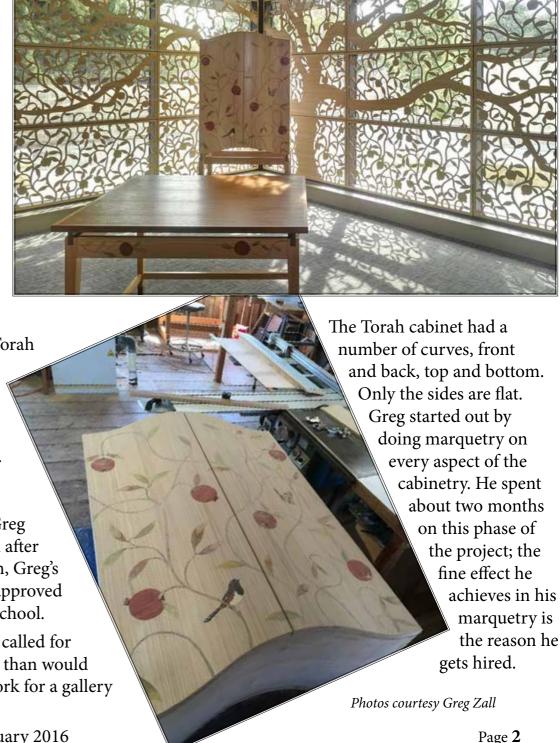
concentrate on the Torah cabinet and the filigree pattern that covers the windows. The planning was an extensive process. First, the architect had a small drawing of his ideas, which Greg worked up, and then after some back-and-forth, Greg's drawings had to be approved by the board of the school.

The school situation called for heavier duty designs than would furniture or woodwork for a gallery

or a home. Greg said he has learned the hard way that in a situation like this, where something is used on a daily basis, robust construction and hardware is a necessity.



Alan Bertozzi Photo by Jose Cuervo



SCWA Wood Forum February 2016

First, he showed us how he made the pomegranates and finally the entire front panel of the cabinet. Greg mostly cuts his own veneers, usually to 3/32", though



Photo courtesy Greg Zall

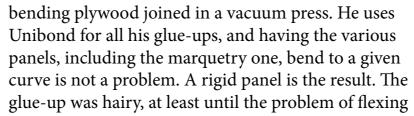
some are thinner, usually 1/16". The background of the Torah cabinet is cypress from Mt. Storm. Greg usually avoids commercial veneers; at 1/40" these are much harder to handle. Greg explained how he glues these together into a manageable panel. He praises his thickness sander, which assures that the final product is about 5/64"; this allows him to use veneers that he buys commercially, mostly from Certainly Woods.

Carob is Greg's wood of choice for the pomegranates: it holds its red color very nicely, this project being his ninth synagogue. Discoloration from migration of sanding dust onto lighter colored woods? Greg likes

his random orbit sander with vacuum attachment, which reduces that problem to a minimum. We saw slides of details: a bee, a bird, a butterfly, which looked

startlingly real.

For the doors, Greg worried about weight, since the sizable cabinet would have been very heavy if made out of solid material. Stronger is not necessarily better in construction: sometimes a lighter solution is called for. The thickness is 1-1/8", considerable for such a large cabinet, a problem that Greg solved by using cardboard honeycomb which bends in one direction, and sheets of



curves was solved. Unibond sets up at 65 degrees, which Greg achieved by turning the heaters up in the small room where he glues things up. Ultimately, though the process was not an easy one, he was satisfied with the result.

Greg waited on fitting the doors until he was sure that the cabinet carcase was done. Even if it was slightly

out of square, he would be able to fit the doors to the carcase. He cut the front, which was built in one piece, into the two doors, which he accomplished with the track saw, using the curved glue form as a support.

The raw edges were covered with a piece of veneer afterwards. He used Sugatsune hinges, which have a bit of three dimensional adjustment in them, and are invisible when the door is



Photo by Art Hofmann

closed, similar to Soss. Striving for hardware invisibility, Greg made his own escutcheon for the lock on the Torah cabinet, and the first attempt was flush with the cabinet. This did not work out; sanding it discolored the surrounding cypress, so

of the surface, achieving a

result that pleased him.

Next up was a brief video of the sanctuary in its entirety, which showed strong light diffused by the panels, and showed the installed Torah cabinet as well as some tables and chairs. A table to hold the spread

> out Torah was another part of the project.

Greg told us in detail about some of the frustrations involved in having the filigree panels made. After drawing everything on the computer and following the many steps in having them approved, he sent everything to Lasercraft, which made a sample. It turns out the size for



Photo by Jose Cuervo

which the windows were spec-ed was slightly off. Result? The sample did not fit, and he watched \$800 fly out the window! (No pun intended). The windows, it was discovered, were not modular, as Greg assumed,

but built on site. As usual, nothing is as it seems. Greg had to re-scale the drawings after each window was remeasured.

Casework was built by Mark Tindley. A display case was fifty feet long; double bi-fold doors, which consisted of hollow core doors wrapped in cypress veneer; and a reception desk with a Marmoleum top as well. The finish for all this was conversion varnish, which holds up well in hard-worked environments.

Concern about the panels themselves was dispelled by the owner of Lasercraft, who assured Greg that they would be stable, which they were: that outfit cut the panels to match Greg's drawings, and, indeed, in practice they do not expand and contract very much, being thin veneers of cypress covering a core of 3/8" MDF, which is stable. The panels had to be removable for the janitors to clean the windows, and are held in place by slotted aluminum at the top and rare earth magnets at the bottom.



Photo by Art Hofmann

Greg showed us a sizable shaper bit on his Felder that he likes using for pattern routing. He says it works well for chairs. Only a tad of the bearing surface was showing on this evening, which elicited some questions. It requires templates, and Greg says the bit works well with templates in MDF. Currently he is using a 1/4" template. The bit was made by Amana,



Photo by Art Hofmann

and had inserts, sharp on all four edges. It takes some getting used to, Greg says, and cautions that such a bit, connected to the powerful shaper motor, has to be respected. He makes sure that the work is toggle-clamped securely to the template, which has handles that assure his safety. Great for chair parts, he tells us, and he can't live without it. He also mentioned that smaller, spiral cutters that have bearings that follow bottom and top are available for router tables. Greg likes the Felder, which he has had for nine years or

so, except when it breaks down, which necessitates a visit from the company's single rep in the area, or a lengthy phone session with the distributor.

Next, we made for the back room, where Greg has his vacuum press, which still contained the

form that was used to mold the back and door panels of the Torah cabinet. The form is supported by spars

every six inches. Greg demonstrated the press, but because it has been acting up lately (an unlocated leak), he asked us to put pressure on the aluminum frame until the pump 'caught.' Greg went on to praise the vacuum press, describing how he is able to accomplish all sorts of simple and complex work with it. Doing what he does, it is indispensable. He bought it from Vacuum Pressing Systems.

A marquetry demo was next up: Greg likes his Excalibur scroll saw. He finds the ability of the machine to tilt its cutting mechanism (rather than tilting the table) ideal. This permits him to use horizontal auxiliary tables on both sides of the saw, which lets him do large panels. He uses the double-bevel method, with the background material on top, and the blade at 7 degrees for his usual 2/0

blade (though sometimes he goes finer) and shop-sawn 5/64" veneer.

The Excalibur can go really slowly, so it is well suited for detail work.
Sawing proceeds counterclockwise around the work.
Starting from an edge creates fissures, so mostly he avoids this, instead drilling a starting

hole with a #70 microbit. Sandshading gives you the possibility of giving the wood a shadow effect, which adds a detailed element to realistic

effects one can achieve with marquetry. Sometimes Greg finds himself doing inlaying, where he routs out



Photos by Jose Cuervo

an area to receive a veneer image, but this is never as good as marquetry, where all pieces are cut at the same time, producing a better fit.

Greg intends to teach a class in marquetry in March, and he passed out some flyers. If you want details, write him at greg@gregzall.com The class is limited to 10 students, the number of scroll saws that he can scout up.

Greg's current project is a series of tall stools in solid walnut, for which he was sent a sketch by the designer. He used SketchUp to create a three dimensional drawing, which he could send to the designer for approval. After that he was able to create templates for both the seat bottoms and the legs from his SketchUp model. He routs out the waste to form a recess in the top of the solid walnut seat. This portion will be hidden by the upholstery. In his method, it is better to rout the inside recess first, then cut the seat out on the band saw a bit large, and then finish it to size with the templatefollowing cutter on the shaper.

Greg lauds the shaper. He likes the way it handles, and the clean way that it leaves work. Greg mentioned a significant advantage of using a shaper: his can be run in reverse; by flipping the cutterhead upside down and reversing the rotation, he can always be cutting with the grain, avoiding tearout.

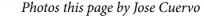
But Greg warns that the shaper has to be used assertively. You have to hold the work firmly. Use it in a gingerly way, the way you might use a router, and its greater power will grab the work and throw it.

The legs for these stools were a challenge as well. He turned them on a lathe, but put facets on them with a spokeshave. Greg glued up the legs from two thick pieces of walnut. We saw one leg in an almost finished state. Only 18 more to go! Greg deliberated with us how he will cut the legs on the upper thicker part to be of equal length. There was some back-and-forth with the group here, but it seems so far a Mark Tindley idea is winning. The legs

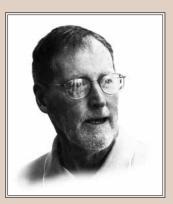
will be bolted to the stool bottoms. Jim Heimbach had a suggestion for achieving a similar effect, but without using a lathe: the same glued up blanks are shaped with a Shinto rasp. There was some ongoing deliberation about this, and then the meeting came to an end with a big round of applause for our host. It was well deserved.











A Note from the Chairman

Bill Taft

Our thanks to Greg Zall for hosting the January meeting and for his fine presentation and demonstrations. At this meeting the members elected Lars Andersen as Association Secretary, so we now have a full board of officers. We also had announcements from two members about new activities for us.

We held our first Officers Meeting for 2016 this past week. This meeting was mainly held to identify all of the activities that need to be done to keep the association running smoothly and get them started. Program Chairman Art Hofmann has all of the Monthly Meeting Programs set up for the year, despite having a couple of last minute cancellations. Take a look at the list on the Events Page of our website. We also talked about this year's Show, our website and some new activities. One of these new activities is to provide additional support for local high school woodshop programs. We are just getting started with these so you will hear more about them soon.

Once again, my goal is to try to bring more members into sharing the duties of running the Association. The reason for this is that we have board members wishing to retire at the end of this year. The main concern is our inability to attract members to take officer positions. This was discussed at the board meeting, but we failed to reach a conclusion as to why this is so and what to do about it. We agreed that we need to focus on attracting new board members, so you will be hearing a lot about it this year.

I am concerned that many members don't know what the officers do. Well, here is your opportunity to find out. I invite you to join in on board activities. Attend one of the board meetings and get a feel for what the board members do, with no commitment required. If you're interested, send me a note (wgtaft@aol.com). Let me know if you have any specific interests.

Minutes from SCWA Board Meeting 21 January 2016

by Lars Andersen, Secretary

Attendees: Chairman Bill Taft, Treasurer Judi Garland, Program Coordinator Art Hofmann, Guild Chairman Larry Stroud, Web Master Michael Wallace, Show Chairman Scott Clark, Newsletter Editor Joe Scannell, and Secretary Lars Andersen.

Bill called the meeting to order at 7:08pm.

1. Finance

a. Financial Statement

Bill (as past Treasurer) presented the tentative 2015 year-end statement. When settled and audited, it will be posted to the website.

b. 2016 Budget

Bill (as past Treasurer) presented the tentative 2016 budget. A small surplus is projected. No revisions were made.

2. Programs

a. Status for 2016

Art presented the tentative plan for the 2016 monthly meetings. Several substitutions have had to be made recently, since the previously-scheduled presenters dropped out for various reasons. We are in good shape.

b. Show Meetings

Show dates are not yet known. Scott will inquire with the Museum.

c. Guild Meeting

Ordinarily held in November, the Guild meeting for 2016 was moved to January due to a cancellation.

d. Holiday Potluck

We appreciate Don Naples hosting a fun 2015 Holiday Potluck. Bill will contact Don Naples to see if he is willing to host it again this year. If not, we will be looking for a volunteer for 2016.

3. Show

a. Schedule for 2016

Show dates are not yet known. Scott will inquire with the Museum.

b. Judges

We do not have judges yet. Ideally, we want a furniture maker, a turner, and an educator or furniture

maker. Board members should propose candidates to Scott, who will create a master list to be prioritized. With Art's help, Bill will create a master list of past judges.

c. Donation to Museum

The Museum expects a donation in exchange for hosting the Show. For 2015, we donated \$750. For 2016, we will propose \$750, and accept \$800. We believe – but we do not have the data to prove – that the Show is still the best-attended Museum event of the year, and that the Museum really wants the Show. We do not believe we are in danger of getting kicked out. We will highlight to Museum staff that we refresh their display pedestals each year. We will offer to have a couple of members do one or more weekend guided/narrated tours for the public. We will also support various talks/arrangements similar to 2015 (Dan Stalzer, Michael Cullen / Larry Stroud) but will encourage the Museum to start working on this much sooner than they did in 2015.

d. Krenov Award

The 2016 Show will again have a Krenov Award sponsored by the Krenov Foundation. In appreciation of the Krenov Foundation, we discussed making a donation to the Foundation. Bill will write an article for the newsletter soliciting feedback/ideas from members, and we will revisit the topic later.

Michael will inquire with the Sam Maloof Foundation about sponsoring an award at the show, considering that 2016 would be Sam's 100th birthday.

4. Website

a. Page maintenance

It is unclear who maintains what pages. Michael will document our pages, and who is believed to own them. Michael will take over the blog on the home page. Michael shared the observation that the Forums are hardly used. To ensure the website has member-only content, they purposely require a member login/password to access. While well-intended, it is unclear whether this is benefitting us or not. We discussed lumping all Forums into one, removing the member-only restriction, and auto-subscribing all members. No decision was made. There was some brainstorming about website design.

b. Administration assignments

We can have at most five people with website

administrator privileges. These will be Michael, Judi, Art, Larry, and Bill.

c. Webmaster transition planning

Michael will be stepping down as Webmaster at the end of 2016. A replacement must be found in time to allow proper training. The main qualifications are a willingness to help, and a basic comfort level with computers and web pages.

5. Education

a. High School Woodshop Support

Over the years, we have been supportive of Bill Hartman's program at Rancho Cotate High School - and vice versa. We expect this relationship to remain strong. At the same time, we recognize that there are other High School programs in the county potentially worthy of support. Michael shared that three members have been helping at Montgomery High School. Their program is in poor shape – power tools are broken, hand tools are in poor shape, they pound pallets apart for wood. Besides mentoring students, Michael has been able to find sources of better wood, and offered to tune up their hand tools. Michael asked if we should play a role here. The Board unanimously recognized the risks of blindly throwing money at the problem. We encouraged the teacher to submit a plan for the program – current state, desired future state, gaps. Subsequently, we can have a meaningful discussion about how to possibly help. Bill offered to help create the plan, if needed.

b. Workshops

Don Naples has offered to put on a free sharpening workshop for members. It is unclear where it would be hosted. We discussed whether we should support this sharpening workshop, and what that would mean. Bill will contact Don to find out more.

We discussed whether/how we should support for-profit workshops by members, such as Greg Zall's upcoming marquetry workshop. We decided that Michael will list these events on the website.

Scott pointed out that if we start hosting workshops, we may need liability insurance. The wood turners' organization pays about \$400 annually for this thru a national membership organization.

The San Diego show often brings in a high-caliber speaker. Larry will inquire about their 2016 plans to see if we can possibly piggy-back on this.

c. Guild Member Support

The topic of Guild members support was raised by Michael. Lars asked about the Guild – who are they, what do they do, and how can they help individual members? Larry explained that we have 22 Guild members. One of their major roles is to jury all Show entries, deciding which ones to accept/reject. Many are or have been Board members. They are also available to help individual members as needed and as their schedule allows – offer to take a Guild member out to lunch, and (s)he will likely accept. To create more transparency, we decided that Larry will create a Guild page on the website, providing an overview of the Guild and a small picture/bio for each Guild member.

6. Administration

a. Succession Planning

Several Board members are looking to retire at the end of the year. Combined with the fact that finding new Board members has been extremely difficult in the past, we are at a crossroads. How do we keep operating? Do we want to? There was a lively discussion. For now, we decided to solicit new Board members in the newsletter and on the website, and for Bill to ask at the monthly meetings. If this is not successful, other options will be considered later.

b. Committees

Bill encouraged Board members to create committees to encourage more member involvement. Michael's initiative for Montgomery High School is a good example.

c. Communication

Bill will add a "From the Chairman" write-up to each 2016 newsletter.

d. Meetings

Bill encouraged as few Board meetings as possible, doing routine business via email.

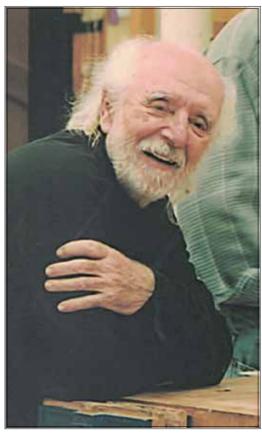
Michael pointed out that we did a member survey last year collecting four pages of ideas for what to do with our surplus, but never acted on the feedback. This should be revisited at a future Board meeting.

7. Other Topics

None.

James Krenov Award

The new five-hundred dollar cash award in our annual *Artistry in Wood* show, won this year by Greg Zall for his beautifully marquetried holly urn, was initiated by The Krenov Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to supporting the art and craft of fine woodworking in northern California. Their mission is "to continue the legacy of James Krenov, his values, approaches to woodworking, and teaching." James Krenov was, of course, the gifted woodworker and teacher who started the Fine Woodworking program at the College of the Redwoods in Fort Bragg.



The Krenov Foundation "supports the art and craft of fine woodworking through scholarships, exhibitions, publications and an online archive of Krenov's work." The Krenov Foundation relies on donations to carry out its mission, which benefits all of us. Members of the Sonoma County Woodworkers Association are particularly fortunate that the Foundation has chosen the entrants of our annual show from which to choose the recipient of their prestigious award. To find out how you can help support, or to learn more about The Krenov Foundation, go to:

http://www.thekrenovfoundation.org/





Geisha Chair by Dugan Essick



Saved from the Other Saw by Ralph Carlson



Six-Legged Table by Joe Van Arx

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Artistry in Wood photos by Tyler Chartier

Christmas Presents

by Bill Taft

For many years I have been making Christmas presents for our grandchildren. Some years it is difficult to figure out what to make because they range in age from six to 21. This year I had an idea about what I wanted to make in late October. Some years ago I made a wooden picture puzzle, a difficult one, for them to put together while we were all vacationing together in Colorado. It was a big hit with them, so this year I wanted to give them each their own puzzle. I had some holly, padauk, wenge and canarywood veneers that could be used to make koi fish in puzzle pieces. The design that I settled on had three fish swimming in a pond.

I must have looked at more than a hundred koi images just to find three fish that I liked. Using these images I sketched up the three koi fish in a pond so that it fit into a 9 by 12 inch puzzle frame. Only the fish would be cut into puzzle pieces.

As I started in on the marquetry for the fish I got to thinking, my grandchildren will solve this puzzle in practically no

time, and then it will sit on a shelf somewhere. However, it would make a nice picture if I skipped cutting the fish into puzzle pieces and put the picture into a nice frame. Thus they each received a

picture called Koi Pond, and I'm pleased to say that all five pictures are hanging on the wall in their rooms.

Using the design sketch for the puzzle I made the marquetry patterns to make five double bevel marquetry 'constructs' of the three fish. A 'construct' is a preliminary marquetry assembly, in this case the three fish, that is cut into a piece of throw away background. Each fish can then be cut into the final background individually. I used 1/8 inch thick veneers for the fish, cutting all three of them into a 1/8 inch thick plywood construct base. The fish were in the same position in the construct as they would be in the final piece.

Anne found a beautiful piece of madrone at Mount Storm that had a wavy grain pattern that looked just like flowing water. I used this madrone for the pond backgrounds, adding a few stones around the edges to make it look like an enclosed fish pond. Then I cut the three koi into each background using double bevel marquetry.

With the marquetry complete I made a near fatal mistake. I wanted these pictures to be thin.

I made the frames to fit a 1/4" thick piece and be flush to the wall. So, I used 1/8" thick Baltic birch plywood for the backing boards. Not thinking

about it, I cut the plywood with the surface grain direction oriented in the same direction as the grain of the madrone background. The pictures curled up dramatically due to swelling during

the glue-up. After trying to flatten them by clamping them with little success, I glued them to a second 1/8" thick backing board that had the surface ply grain perpendicular to the

first backing board. On this glue-up, the pictures were clamped with the pictures curved opposite to the curl

to allow for some spring back. This worked, although I still had to remove a bit of curl on some of the pieces.

Once the pictures were flat, they were sanded flat using a sanding block, starting with 150 grit and ending with 400 grit sandpaper to remove any 'across the grain' scratches. They were finished with about



six brushed-on coats of wax-free shellac. There was a lot of bleed-out from the padauk pieces, and I had to apply about four coats of shellac to just the padauk surfaces first, before applying the shellac to the whole surface. I lightly sanded in between coats with 400 grit sandpaper. The final coat was lightly sanded, then polished with 0000 steel wool and buffed with a knit cotton rag. This gives a finish similar to a French polish finish.

Making these gifts was fun, even with the frustration of dealing with the curling. I came up with a way to fix it, and I'm very pleased with the final results. Especially after hearing my grandson Tyler say, "Gee Grandpa, this is the best you have ever made."

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 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 | |
| | 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