



WOOD FORUM

Newsletter of the Sonoma County Woodworkers Association

Volume 36, Issue 3

March 2016

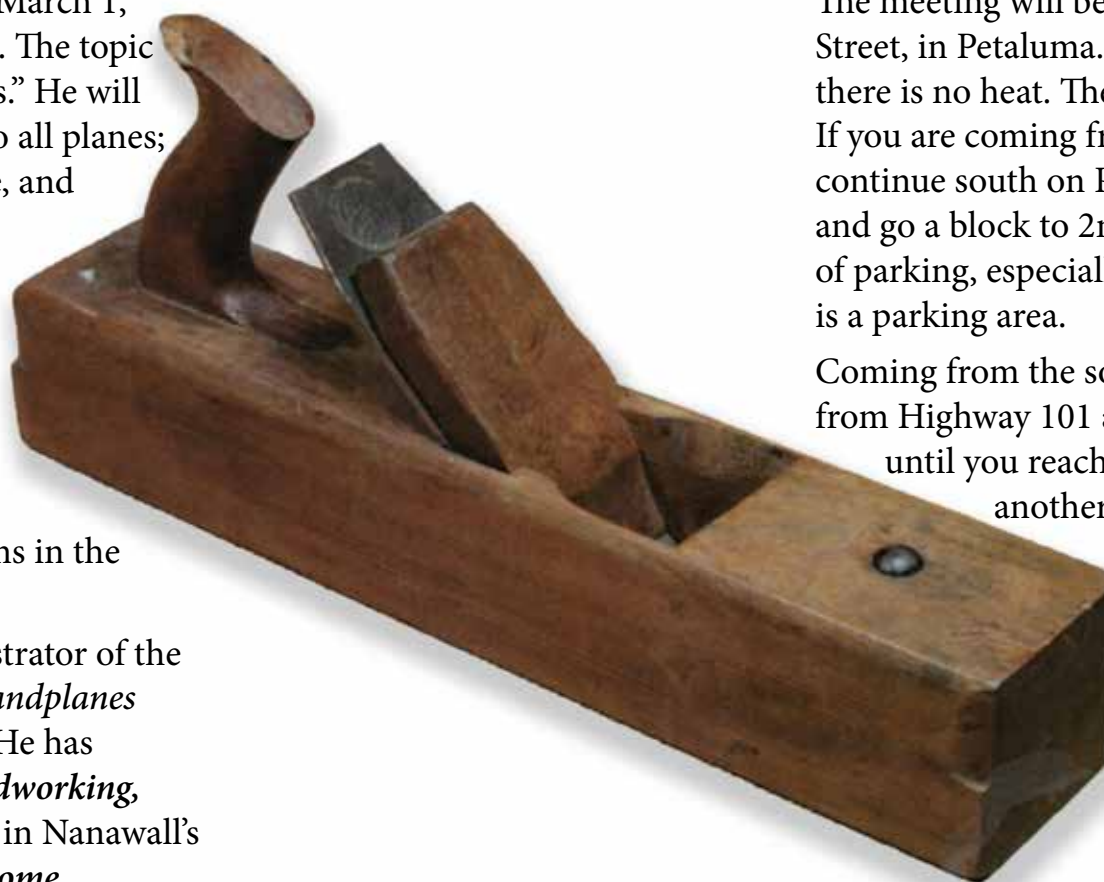
Plane Speaking

by Art Hofmann

We will be meeting early this month, on Tuesday March 1, at 7pm, and our guest speaker will be Scott Wynn. The topic will be "Getting the Most Out of Your Handplanes." He will talk about maximizing the six features common to all planes; how to get tear-out free work; which planes to use, and when.

Scott has maintained a shop providing furniture, cabinetry, and millwork in San Francisco since 1976. He is also a licensed architect and has been the builder as well as designer on a number of architectural projects. He has exhibited furniture in numerous shows and galleries - all of which no longer exist - and currently has some of small items in the Industrious Life Gallery and The Perish Trust.

Of special interest is that he is the author and illustrator of the 315 page textbook, *The Woodworker's Guide to Handplanes* which has been recently translated into German. He has written articles for *Fine Homebuilding*, *Fine Woodworking*, and *Woodwork* magazines; and has been featured in Nanawall's catalog, *Metropolitan Home*, *Sunset Magazine*, *Home Magazine's Best Kitchen Ideas*, *Northern California Home and Garden*, and *Old House Interiors*.



The meeting will be hosted by Scott Borski in his shop at 609-2nd Street, in Petaluma. Bring your own chair, and dress warmly, as there is no heat. The shop is south of the Petaluma theater district. If you are coming from the north, aim for downtown Petaluma and continue south on Petaluma Boulevard to H Street. Hang a left turn, and go a block to 2nd Street, then turn right. There is a fair amount of parking, especially if you go to the end of the block, where there is a parking area.

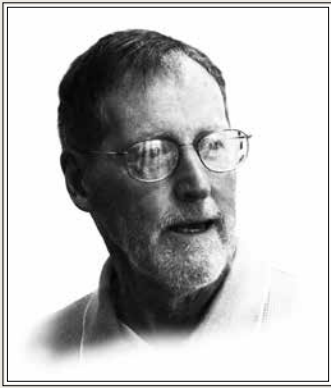
Coming from the south, take the Petaluma Boulevard South exit from Highway 101 and continue on it as it goes under the freeway until you reach H Street, where you will take a right, then another right on 2nd Street. The phone number, should you need it, is (707) 778-8481.

If you want to eat first, there is a fine little café on the corner of H and 2nd Street called Aqus. They have a nice 60 item menu that you can peruse on their website:

<http://tinyurl.com/Aqus-Cafe>



Photo by Rick Mastelli



A Note from the Chairman

Bill Taft

I really enjoyed Dugan Essick's presentation on his work at the February meeting. I especially liked the part about building a cruising sailboat, a passion of mine that I intend to share with some of you this summer at our small shops meeting. I'm looking forward to Scott Wynn's presentation on planes, something that I have little experience with.

Don Naples will be holding a sharpening class on February 27th. We have been using the 'Events' feature of our website for signing up for this class. I hope that this feature has helped to get the word out to all of you.

The Press Democrat presented a very nice article about the students in Bill Hartman's Rancho Cotate High wood shop classes making armoires for the Social Advocates for Youth's Dream Center. This program is a great example of what our youth can do, given the opportunity. We sent an announcement about the article to you. It is worth looking at if you haven't already read it.

Once again, my goal is to try to bring more members into sharing the duties of running the Association. One 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. I think that we have taken the first step toward having more members volunteer for association activities. Our Education Policy Committee has been formed under the leadership of Michael Wallace. This committee has five members and they will work on one of our major missions, supporting woodworking education. Thank you Michael and committee members for taking part in this.



Cube Upon Stand by Kerry Marshall

Wings by Fabrice Landa



Artistry in Wood photos by Tyler Chartier

Editor's Corner

This month you will have the opportunity on page 7 to glimpse the inner workings of some fine cabinetwork by one of our members, Larry Stroud. I am hoping that articles such as this can become an ongoing, perhaps even monthly, treat. As you will notice, there really is very little writing involved; basically it is photo essay.

I would like to encourage members who are involved in projects to document their progress photographically, and then to share those photos with me. Obviously, I will need some description of the project and the photos, but I will take care of doing the writeup and layout, so all you have to do is sit back and soak up the acclaim. I think this could be great fun for all of us.

Joe Scannell



An Evening with an Inventive Craftsman

by Art Hofmann

Bill Taft opened the meeting somewhat past 7 pm, first thanking Greg Zahl for hosting last month's meeting, and then asking for guests to identify themselves, which several did. Bill mentioned yearly dues and that they should be paid to Judi Garland, our new treasurer, who appeared in the door at the same moment that he mentioned her.

Don Naples had an long announcement about a sharpening seminar that he is teaching in Santa Rosa at Alan Bertozzi's house in Fountaingrove. The date is February 27, and the seminar is free to all members. It is extensive, running about four hours. Lunch will be provided by SCWA. Members were urged to sign up at the meeting, or online. Contact Mike Wallace if you can't figure out how to sign up online.

Art Hofmann told the group that Scott Wynn, an architect from San Francisco, would address us on the subject of handplanes, of which he has written a book, *Woodworker's Guide to Handplanes*. If your blades are nice and sharp, as they should be if you've attended Don Naples' seminar, attend the next meeting and pick up some pointers on using planes.

Art Hofmann then introduced Dugan Essick, our man of the evening, a woodworker from Grass Valley. Dugan has been in the trade for a long time - forty years - and has survived. Dugan was always busy making stuff in his parent's garage. His parents gave him a book entitled *The Boy Mechanic*, a collection of old articles from *Popular Mechanics* magazine which he loved and pored over. His school had a thriving woodshop and other shops as well, including an electric shop and a metal shop. It was here that he cut his teeth.

He liked making things. A visit by Art Carpenter to San Francisco State's Industrial Arts program, where Dugan was a student, opened his eyes to the possibility of creating furniture. He began to make things large and small from koa, which was readily available at the time. He got a license to be a street artist in Berkeley, and sold things from a spot on Shattuck Avenue, a situation that led to larger projects.

He got a call from his brother, who was building a home for a land developer in Ojai, and so began the house building part of young Dugan's education. En route he made a detour to the Gamble house in Pasadena, another eye opener. He built a lot of things for this man, among them an executive desk, and the situation

lasted for several years, after which Dugan and his wife set out on a trip to the Pacific Northwest in order to find a country setting for a home. This morphed into an adventure in boating and boat construction. Once again in southern California, he worked for a boat yard and spent three years in his off-time building a thirty-six footer, which he and his wife sailed to Mexico for a time.

But all the while Dugan found himself dreaming about the next boat. They

returned to Newport Beach and he sold the first boat, had the second one designed, and set about building it, a forty-six footer. We saw slides of the early construction phase, laying out the hull, building the ribs. This boat was of vertical grain fir. He spent six weeks with a block plane laying out the planking. It had to be beveled so that one piece sat firm against the next, and the bevel changed every two inches or so. After four years or so, the boat had two layers of wood on the hull plus two layers of fiberglass. He built a Flintstone arrangement with plywood wheels and a superstructure to help turn the boat right-side up, which he accomplished with the help of his brother and a friend. Remarkably, it

worked and no one was injured. Righting the hull was happiest day of his life. At that point, it was a matter of filling the interior with wood, very much like house construction, though being a boat no two pieces were alike.



All photos this article courtesy of Dugan Essick

A keel was needed. There was no budget for a manufactured keel, so Dugan made one of sheet steel and then poured his own lead, all six thousand pounds of it, an undertaking that took about eighteen hours and was not without its own dangers. He built his own rudder, too. He caulked the teak deck with a material he describes as excellent for the purpose, but so sticky you have to throw your clothes away. After many other parts were added, he painted the boat with epoxy paint. Elapsed time to this point: seven

years. Skipping many steps, we saw photos of the launch. After time in the Channel Islands, where Dugan worked and saved money for Mexico, he and his wife sailed off and spent several fine years. Then came time to sell the boat, which entailed a series of intermediary jobs, while waiting: a koa desk made of cast-off wood from a Hilton Hotel in Maui, a front door for a retired Ventura County lawman, which led to a cowboy bar of walnut. He was, says Dugan, a really good customer, who valued



western themes in his furnishings, guns and books at the same time. He and his wife looked for a long time for a level place in Grass Valley, unusual for that area. There, Dugan built a large shop with the idea in mind of having a woodworking school. And as with his other ventures, once he set his mind to it, he made it happen. His wife helped him lay out the shop. A friend from the Bay Area visited and a portion of the framing went up. Rented lifts helped. The building was begun in July and closed in by October, and then came several years of doing the interior. There is lots of room, wood heat, and solar panels on the roof. In the back of the shop, he has created an entire apartment for



his students and visitors. The core idea of his shop is that students would come and work on a project which they would finish over the course of five days. This necessitated some thinking about decent projects that would fit the bill. We saw slides of certain student projects: a Craftsman side table, a top and bottom cabinet.

At the same time, Dugan was looking for a way of making chairs economically, an almost impossible task. Dugan bought a multi-router, and has good things to say about it, but it was the large XL Domino which changed his woodworking in a major way, and his way of teaching as well. Now, almost all the furniture that comes out of shop, whether student or personal, is put together with the Domino. He credits this tool with changing his woodworking more than anything.



Dugan teaches a class in which he shows how to cut out and put together a chair in three hours, refinement and sanding excluded. Now a Morris chair is the most popular project in his classes. We saw a slide of a modified Morris chair made for a woman client who didn't like Arts and Crafts furniture. Then came a slide of a chair that came



out of his classes of last year, put together with Dominos, with the joinery largely exposed. In his woodworking club, he is known as Domino Dugan. Using Maloof's rocker as a starting point for his design, this tool makes the chair doable in a week for his students. The chair is greatly simplified; all the joints are butt joints.



Dugan has been using man-made materials in his furniture for some time now, namely Kevlar and carbon fiber. He showed us a picture of a Shaker candle table, a well-known traditional piece. The leg pieces are very delicate looking. Dugan was able to reduce the leg thickness somewhat by inserting a layer of carbon fiber in the center, and making layered wood legs. They look like they have a black pinstripe in the center, and are incredibly strong.

A series of slides showed cheerful students at the end of their work weeks with projects completed. Teaching the classes is a great satisfaction for Dugan, too. Reluctant at first, Dugan now teaches a class for beginners as well, focusing a lot of attention on the safe use of power tools.

The other leg of Dugan's present existence lies in producing his own designs and furthering his exposure in the world of furniture shows and galleries. We saw a succession of slides relating to some work produced from an eighty year old oak tree on his property, whose wood turned out to be marble-like and spalted.

A chair design he had saved from years ago surfaced. He had formerly considered the legs too weak, but when the sketch re-emerged, it seemed a good project for a carbon fiber treatment, and it turned out to be so. The carbon fiber, laminated into the shape of the leg, makes it incredibly strong. Another chair has made it in photographic form into a Philadelphia show, *Chairs of the 21st Century*. Dugan brought with him for his presentation a chair with back slats that flexed, an unusual feature. He used sycamore, a decorative wood with little strength, but bonded it with a layer of laminated carbon fiber in the center. This makes the slats decorative and strong. Carbon fiber can be made into plywood-like structures, or used in rod form, placing it in routed out spaces at points where wood might fail. Using this material opens one to a new look at the design process.

Alluding to another chair he had brought along, one that was shown in the last *Artistry in Wood* show, Dugan continued to point out the virtues of using these new materials: the foot meets the leg at a sharp angle, perfect for a carbon fiber reinforcement. The wood is bubinga and the chair features a number of ebony embellishments in the form of trim, so the black carbon fiber fits right in. Another chair features back slats made of a kevlar-carbon fiber weave, showing the weave this time, and actually, it seems to work well in this context. This chair found favor in a show recently at Blueline Gallery in Roseville.

A final slide showed some old wood from redwood sequoias from the Sierras, that Dugan formed into a sculpture. At this point, the presentation was over, and Dugan answered

questions. Interesting points were as follows: carbon fiber is conductive, and will stop a SawStop! The carbon fiber and epoxy are very hard on tools - old bits and tools are recommended. From his boat building days, Dugan learned to love epoxy, and readily incorporates it in his wood projects.



He keeps his classes really small, two or three people, and this works out well, though it is not remunerative. In response to questions about the Domino machine, Dugan continued to sing its praises. Its only drawback, of course, is the price.

The evening ended with another round of applause. Members were really pleased by Dugan's willingness to tackle large projects and his inventiveness and originality.





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Why I'm a SCWA Volunteer

About 8 (or was it 9?) years ago, I found out about the Sonoma County Woodworkers Association. I was then a recent immigrant to Sonoma County, sort of retired and needing to find somewhere I could learn more about woodworking. I can recall my first meeting. Somewhere in background I heard a familiar voice. It was David Marks. OMG! Here was a guy who I had been watching on TV, and he was part of this club? I had to get involved, because I thought there must be a lot of talent in any group that would include him. Sure enough, I attended a show and was amazed at the workmanship of the members. So right away I joined. Sometime later, there was an annual election and I decided to throw my hat into the ring. I started at the top, Chairman. I'd held similar positions in other organizations and felt I could do the job. It was evidently the only time, in a long while, that there was more than one candidate for a position. I lost, mainly because no one knew who I was, but that didn't discourage me. I ran again the next year, unopposed this time, and won.

It was a significant event. Through my membership on the Board in a variety of positions, I found how the Association is run and what it takes to hold everything together. The monthly presentations, the newsletter and of course, the annual *Artistry in Wood* show. And what it takes is commitment from members to provide the best environment possible to share and learn all facets of woodworking. No matter if you're a professional who has possibly "seen it all" or a struggling beginner, I

feel there's always something new to learn and see. We are so lucky to be surrounded by the immense talent in our Association.

Being a volunteer allowed me to learn the names of many of the members of the Association. While I can't

say that I know all of the names of the 120+ members today, I do know many, and count several of them among my friends. I feel I'm in the company of a good group, and because I know that groups like ours are not run by a paid staff, it's the volunteers who make it all happen.

Chances are, many of you feel that being a volunteer, either as a member of the Board or just helping out on the show, would be too taxing or just a bother. Well, it isn't. It is extremely important that if the Association is to continue, members contributing their precious time and energy will ensure that survival. Organizations have failed because members just didn't recognize the importance of everyone's willingness to contribute.

So, think about being a volunteer.

Later this year there will be a call for nominees to be a member of the Board. Several Board members have stated that they will be retiring and will not stand for re-election. If the SCWA is important to you, please consider putting your name up for election. You will find that everyone on the Board will help you to fulfill the duties of the position, and former members will certainly mentor you when needed.

I am a SCWA volunteer and proud of it!

Michael Wallace



Michael Wallace



Following the Curve

by Larry Stroud



I had a request from an artist friend of mine to build her a dresser in a style suggesting the torii gates in Japan. She had specific height and width requirements and wanted the curve on the top to be unbroken, and after suggesting a few possibilities we agreed on the preliminary design sketched at far right.



Since the carcass was figured cherry and the drawer faces koa, I chose tineo (*Weinmannia trichosperma*) from Chile/Argentina as a wood for the panels. I was drawn to it because of the coloring and the figure.

Since the line of the top was to be unbroken and made from solid wood, and the carcass was to be veneered, it was necessary to employ a sub-top to allow for wood movement.



I used a router to shape the top, and fixed the top to the sub-top at the front of the cabinet, allowing the top to expand towards the back on the sub-top.





Before the hardware was installed



“Torii” dresser before leaving the shop.



I chose Japanese “hiru-te” (or leech) pulls with their upward concavity again suggesting the upward sweep of the top. I sandblasted the pulls and then added a brown patina to harmonize with the overall color palette.



Riftsawn legs

As mentioned, I used tino veneer on the panels. (I had never heard of tino before, and found it while looking for something that would go with cherry). I was drawn to it because of the coloring and the figure. The tino veneer was about 8 feet long - with the figure at 90 degrees to the dark vertical stripes in some places and at more of an angle in others. By selecting different areas for the panels I was able to have the figure “rise up” from the center outward, suggesting the curvature of the top. It is a subtle effect but makes the design more cohesive, kind of like using rift sawn material for curved legs so the grain follows the curve of the legs.

My wife was sad to see the dresser leave the shop for delivery last year, so I promised I would make another one for our home, and last week “Torii 2” was completed. I changed a few things with this latest version, namely, a breadboard top, which simplified construction, and black acacia for the drawer faces and door frames, and high density polyethylene (versus hard maple) for the drawer runners.

But I kept a few choices the same in order to reach a harmonious design in each piece:

For both dressers I carefully selected rift-sawn cherry for the legs which allows the pattern of the grain to follow the curve of the leg. And I again chose tineo for the door panels since it worked well for both dressers, complimenting the cherry, koa and black acacia.



“Torii 2”

By carefully selecting the grain for the legs and the door panels along with the style of the pulls and by choosing colors which work well together I think we arrived at a fairly harmonious design.

All photos in this article are courtesy of Larry Stroud



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<u>Chairman</u>	Bill Taft	<u>Secretary</u>	Lars Andersen
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<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 _____

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What can you do to help further the organizational goals of our volunteer-run association? Please tell us how you would like to help:

Please send check and completed application to:

Sonoma County Woodworkers Association, PO Box 4176, Santa Rosa, CA 95402