



WOOD FORUM

Newsletter of the Sonoma County Woodworkers Association

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Anchors Aweigh

The speaker for our April 3 meeting will be a familiar face, former Chairman/Treasurer/Show Chairman William Taft. Bill has been a longtime boating aficionado, and has owned a boat almost constantly since age 16, when he bought his first. He is a retired mechanical engineer who specialized in component and product design. During lulls between design projects he often found the time to start a boat building project, and over the years has built five from scratch, and learned a great deal along the way.

In 2016 we heard from Dugan Essick (March 2016 edition of *Wood Forum*) about his boat building adventures, including the hair-raising experience of righting the hull (the hulls are built upside-down, and must be inverted). Bill has some expertise in this area, having done it five times. Come learn the secrets.

Bill will present slides documenting the process of constructing two of his sailboats. He also plans to talk a little bit about boat design, materials and construction methods.



For this month's meeting we return once again to **180 Studios**, 150 Todd Road, Santa Rosa.

The April 3 meeting begins at 7pm.

180 Studios is located just off Highway 101 at the southwest corner of the Todd Road exit.

Go west on Todd Road for a very short distance. Turn left at the open gate **JUST BEFORE THE RAILROAD TRACKS**. If you go over the tracks, you have gone too far.

From the west, make your way to Todd Road by going south on Stony Point Road from Hwy 12. Turn left on Todd Road. Continue for a few miles. **JUST AFTER THE RAILROAD TRACKS**, turn right at the open gate. If you get to Highway 101, you have gone too far. See you there!



Photo courtesy Bill Taft

SCWA Monthly Meeting

March 6, 2018

by Joe Scannell

The March 6 meeting of the SCWA was a larger than usual turnout, and as 7pm rolled around, Greg Zall's shop was packed nearly to capacity. The meeting was convened by Chairman Thomas Vogel, who welcomed six new members in attendance, including retirees Frank Ertel, Kevin Grant, and Mike Dziedzic; and Mark Pierson, who reportedly will never retire.

Show Chair Don Jereb directed our attention to the newest issue of *Woodworker West*, which featured a two page spread of the **2017 Artistry in Wood Show**.

He went on to say that he had been contacted by an editor of *Fine Woodworking*, who requested a complete set of the show entry photos for possible inclusion in their Gallery section.

Don said *Artistry in Wood 2018* is slated for November through the first week of January 2019. The start date has not been finalized; it could be as early as the first week or as late as the last week of November. Don is already in the planning stages for show staging, photography, and gift shop sales items, and will be looking for individuals who can help him on these. He still envisions a retrospective section in the show,

featuring five to six pieces from previous years, space permitting. The museum will determine how much room we have to work with.

Don said that Garrett Hack is coming to our meeting on Friday, September 14 to do a presentation. Tentative plans are in the works for a tuition-based class/workshop session over that weekend. The venue has not yet been determined.

Program Chair Chuck Root then introduced the evening's speaker and host, Greg Zall. Greg is a 1992 graduate of the College of the Redwoods, and has returned there as a teacher. He also teaches privately in his shop in Petaluma. He is an accomplished furniture maker, but his signature focus is marquetry. Tonight his presentation was on a related subject, parquetry.

Greg began by unveiling his latest project, a large cabinet for a synagogue in Petaluma. Outwardly, it appears to be an ordinary cabinet, standing just under eight feet in height, with paneled doors of mahogany, exhibiting excellent workmanship. But when the doors are swung open, a surprise awaits. There is a second set of doors (on sliders) that are decorated with a large marquetry depiction of the Tree of Life. This scene is carried over to the inside of the outer doors, so that the entire image is quite large (so large Señor Cuervo was unable to photograph it in its entirety). Opening these inner doors reveals the treasure, the Torah.

Greg bought 1/16" thick veneers from Certainly Wood for the background (quartersawn maple), and sawed specialty woods for the small details. This job included poplar, zebrawood, cypress, carob, canarywood, nutmeg, narra, bloodwood, and his favorite, yellowheart with blue stain. He used ultra light MDF for substrate throughout this job, and before veneering he reinforced the areas where screw-holding was important by inserting beech biscuits into Domino mortises for the screws to bite into.



The Tree of Life marquetry was broken into quite a few sections of manageable size and worked on separately, then assembled into the whole. The most problematic area is where the sliding doors meet, because many of the leaves overlap the gap. Even small misalignment of the two halves will catch the eye and annoy. To obviate this problem, Greg hung the doors in their final position, with the marquetry on one door finished including the half leaves, and the other door complete but for the other halves. Then he completed the leaves using inlay techniques, producing a

perfect, eye-pleasing result.

The trunk of the Tree of Life started out life as a single piece of wood. After bookmatching the two halves, Greg crosscut them in several places and reoriented the pieces to achieve a gradual upward/outward curve



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in the trunk, with the grain following that curve. To join the pieces, he used a squiggly jigsaw puzzle cut that prompts one to think of the way a skull is joined together. The joints are virtually invisible.



There is a full-width facade and crown molding, which was not installed on this evening. The headboard contains considerable Hebrew calligraphy, as seen here. Because its 8' length precluded using the double-bevel marquetry method that Greg prefers, and not wanting to cut it into smaller pieces, which would interrupt grain flow, he elected to produce the panel as an inlay. Greg farmed out that part of the job to a CNC laser company in Santa Rosa, and they were able to complete the job to everyone's satisfaction at a reasonable cost. Before beginning the actual job, the laser people ran some test pieces using the same veneers (mahogany and maple) to tweak the fit between the inlay and the background. Apparently they can adjust this with considerable precision. The edge burning of the pieces was very minimal, and in fact added a nice definition to the letters, as can be seen at right. A great marriage of old and new.



The crown molding presented another problem. The main piece of molding is an arc, and short pieces of the same profile are mitered to the ends. However, the miter angle is not your usual 45°, and in fact the profiles of the two meeting pieces are not the same, as Greg demonstrates here (he arrived at the alternate profile by using SketchUp). Rather than risk losing any more hair follicles, Greg farmed this out to another SCWA member, Philip Nereo, who ground a special shaper knife set to do the job.

Building furniture for a public place demands robust design. Good joinery and quality hardware are important. The lower interior door hinges used in this project are a good example. They are TECTUS invisible door hinges that open a full 180° and are adjustable in three dimensions. The upper interior doors slide on Häfele EKU soft closing sliding door hardware.



Photos this article by Jose Cuervo

After fielding numerous questions on this major undertaking, Greg moved on to a discussion of parquetry. Although it involves the same materials, there are significant differences between parquetry and marquetry. For one thing, the former involves straight line cuts. Marquetry lends itself more to organic shapes and natural curves, and many of its practitioners today employ the double-bevel method of sawing the veneers.

Because parquetry involves only straight lines and geometric shapes, the pieces can be cut with an ordinary handsaw or a tablesaw, with square, not beveled, edges. The secret to success with this type of work is to never work with small pieces. Greg typically starts with a piece of veneer large enough to hold easily, makes his first cut and dresses that edge on a shooting board, then glues on the next piece (its edge also dressed). Then he repeats the process in whatever way is needed for the design. But he never tries to work with tiny pieces of veneer.



He demonstrated how the technique could be used to create a star pattern, and how the angles can be easily tweaked with a plane. And for those occasional situations where it becomes necessary to plane against the grain, or work up to a fragile point, he turns to a disk sander to get the fit he wants.



He showed us a project he has worked on intermittently for a couple of years. It is a cockatoo, all white, made from some very nice holly, with the details sand-shaded in. He is now making the background, a random geometric assembly of various sized pieces of wenge and ebony (shown at right). When completed, the holly bird will be double-beveled into the dark background. He plans to do this with the bird placed on top of the background (rather than his normal method with the inset piece on the bottom) so that he can more carefully follow the perimeter of the bird to achieve that perfect Greg Zall fit.



After the many audience questions had been discussed and answered, Greg reminded everyone that he would once again be offering classes to those interested. More information to follow. The evening concluded with a very generous round of applause for our host.



Elliptical Turning

by Joe Scannell

In the early 70s I came to own an old cast iron Sears lathe, a very primitive thing, 1/2" spindle, no chuck, no faceplate, just a simple drive center and a dead center in the tailstock. I used it for spindle turning mostly, and improvised ways to hold other shapes as the need arose. Somewhere in those years I read John Jacob Holtzapffel's *Hand or Simple Turning*. One thing led to another as new ideas danced through my head. One idea, which never reached fruition, was the notion of turning ovals. Holtzapffel made a casual mention of the concept, but offered no further explanation, and so it was forgotten for years, until, at the recent *Artistry in Wood Show* I saw the entries by Warren Glass of Novato.

I spoke to Warren about his technique, and he invited me to his shop for a demonstration. It seems Warren was bitten by the bug when, in December of 2015, an English woodturner, David Springett, published

an article in *American Woodturner* magazine in which he described a mechanism for turning oval shapes on a standard lathe. There being no way to convey his methods in a brief format, I refer the interested reader to the original article, which is available here:

<https://tinyurl.com/Oval-Chuck>

In addition, there is a short video of the lathe in action which I found interesting:

<https://vimeo.com/142546805>

Warren built at least two versions of this chuck, and discovered the weak points. Basically, the killer is friction. Close tolerances are needed, but also create a lot of friction. Even with lubrication and judicious selection of woods for the various parts, the moving parts get hot and eventually the whole thing seizes up. He found he could run it for two minutes at a time, then he had to let everything cool off, not a very productive way to work.

After casting about on the internet for a year, he found a commercially-made unit



from Australia that did what he wanted, at a good price. Just one problem: it was a box of over 200 parts! The seller's husband had disassembled the unit and expired before putting it back together. Long story short, Warren was undeterred, and on Sunday I saw the results of his determination.

The photos do not really convey the "ovalness" of his turned bowls. To really feel the magic of this form you have to hold them. And to really get the feel of the process, you must feel the lathe trying to jump around



the room. There's a fair amount of vibration here, even with counterbalance weights in the head. It is very important for the tool to be at center height, neither high nor low. To help with this, he uses a laser level to strike a horizontal line at just the right height. To get a taste of what's involved, check out this video:

<https://vimeo.com/261254988>

Warren will be doing a demo at a meeting of the Wine Country Woodturners on November 20, 2018.

Photos this article by Jose Cuervo

Artistry in Wood 2017



Straw Marquetry Wall Panel by Joe Amaral



Bleached Vase by Brian Cullen



One Season by Vincent Van Dyke



Teak Boxes with Trays by Thomas Vogel



Teredo VI by Marshall Kerry

Photos by Debbie Wilson

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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.

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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:

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