



# WOOD FORUM

Newsletter of the Sonoma County Woodworkers Association

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June 2018

## Blurring the Edges of Craft Through Collaboration

Our June 5 meeting will feature a presentation by SCWA Guild member and well known teacher and writer Michael Cullen.

Collaboration has been an essential part of Michael Cullen's lifelong relationship with craft. His main interest in giving this talk is to encourage people to step away or out of their world and to experience how others work and create. Michael likes to say that the materials may differ, but the language of creating is a common thread. During his talk he'll discuss how working collaboratively has affected his work as an artist, woodworker and writer, a choice that has led him around the world. He'll share stories and images about the joys and realities from early days at Emma Lake International, to working in France, Nepal and most recently, Cambodia.



Michael Cullen works out of Blue Horse Studios in Sonoma County, where he's been designing and making pieces for almost thirty years. His work ranges from delicate boxes that fit in the palm of your hand to monolithic sculptures that are best lifted by crane. He's written extensively on furniture-making and design for both *Woodwork* and *Fine Woodworking* magazine. His work is widely published and has appeared in museums and exhibits across the country.

**When:** June 5, 2018; 7pm

**Where:** 500 Rohde Lane, Petaluma





# SCWA Monthly Meeting

May 1, 2018

by Joe Scannell

Chairman Tom Vogel kicked off the meeting by welcoming guests, then handed off to Show Chair Don Jereb. Don outlined the dates for *Artistry in Wood* 2018, as follow:

Entry Drop-off Day: Thursday, November 8

Guild Review Day: Friday, November 9

Photography Day: Monday, November 12

Meeting with the Judges evening:

Tuesday, November 13

Show Opening Night: Friday, November 16

Show Closing: Sunday, January 6

Don also mentioned that one judge has been enlisted, but he was still on the hunt for two more. Please forward any suggestions.

The Garrett Hack class is still planned for the weekend following the Friday presentation in September, and Don still needs to borrow some true woodworking benches to make the class happen. He guesses the class will be about 10 members in size, and the cost will be determined by the number of enrollees. It may be a two

or three day class, and he estimates the cost at about \$250 to \$300 per person. Please contact Don if you can loan him a bench for a few days.

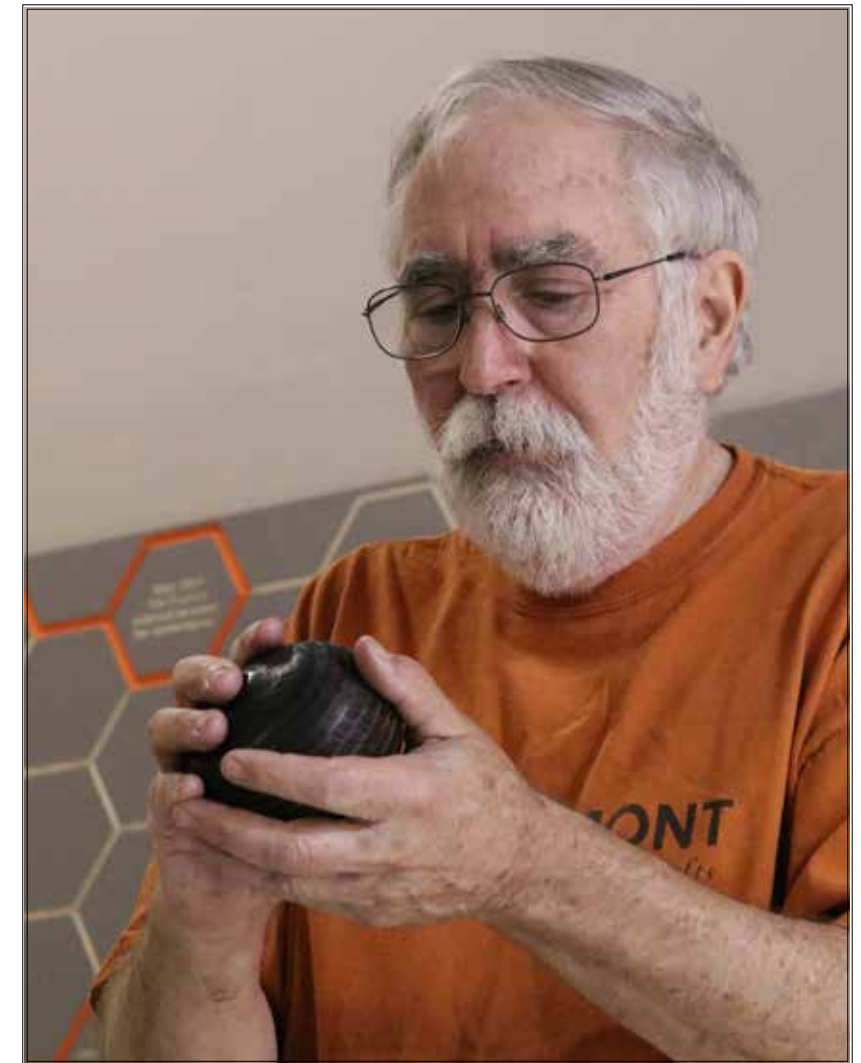
Chuck Root, the Program Chair, discussed the upcoming schedule of presentations. He still needs two speakers to round out the calendar for the year, and is anxious to hear some suggestions from the membership. Chuck has arranged for Dr. Sara Robinson of Oregon State University to speak next April. Dr. Robinson is a professor of wood anatomy, and an artist, and these two influences have led her to become known as Doctor Spalting. Last year she authored a book, **Spalted Wood**, which this writer can highly recommend. Chuck mentioned that if there is sufficient interest, she is available to conduct a class on spalting when she is here in the Spring. There is much information available on the web about spalting. If the reader is interested, a good place to start is:

<http://spaltedwood.com/>

Chuck then introduced the speaker for the evening, the renowned woodturner from Sonoma, Hugh Buttrum, who began wood turning when he was in high school. After a hitch in the Navy and a career as a California State Fish and Wildlife Officer, he got serious about turning. Self-taught, he began with Richard Raffin's book on the subject, then refined his skills and began developing his own signature style. Things got really serious when his wife enrolled him in a class at Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts in Gatlinburg, Tennessee. He thrived in that environment, and went back in 2000 to work as a volunteer. He is going to return next October, again as a volunteer.

Hugh is clearly in the grip of his craft, and forewarned the audience of what may await should any present take the same path. He is an inveterate wood collector. With between 600 and 700 roughed out bowls in various stages of drying, and 70 years on the clock, he made it sound all very ominous. But no one in the audience took him seriously, most likely because we are all in the same quandary. So we take each day as

it comes, which is what Hugh does, too. He still loves getting free wood, and "No" is not in his vocabulary. People regularly contact him about trees they are cutting down, and offer him the wood for free. And so the count continues to spiral upward.



*Hugh Buttrum*

He told a story about a symposium of the American Association of Woodturners he attended in Davis some years ago. The legendary David Ellsworth had just finished a demonstration, and placed his hollowing tools against a wall while the audience gathered around to chat. Hugh inched over to the tools for a closer look, and Ellsworth turned to him and said, "I'll sell you a set for \$60. Or I'll tell you how to make your own, for free." And so he did. Hugh described the process. He uses drill rod, in various diameters determined by the tool requirements, and drills a hole into the end



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[don@WoodshopMercantile.com](mailto:don@WoodshopMercantile.com) (707) 331-4609



of the rod. Into this hole he cements a piece of a high speed steel tool blank (as used in metal lathes) with Super Glue. A bit of shaping of the cutting edge, and it's done. Put a handle on it and get to work! When he has ground away the bit to exhaustion, he simply heats the shank with a torch, extracts the tool bit and replaces it with another, and he's back in business.



His strategy for hollow vessels is essentially this. He starts with green wood, and shapes the outside close to the final shape, except for the bottom, which is left thicker so there is something to hold in the chuck. Next he drills a hole down the center of his blank, close to the desired final depth, and uses a straight tool to widen the internal space, with frequent pauses to clean out the chips. Then he switches to a side cutting tool, and continues trimming the inside until he has about 3/16" of wall thickness. At this point he sets the rough turning aside to dry for a few months, which often turns into years.

When the time is right, he chucks the vessel back in the lathe and finishes the outside, reverse mounting the piece in a vacuum chuck or a jam chuck so he can finish the foot. The most important part of the whole job is sanding, which Hugh says most turners neglect to do well. He likes his Grex 2" random orbital sander for this task.

He next discussed turning bowls, and finishing them while still wet. His method is to turn the piece to completion, then wet sand to 150-220, using a spray bottle of water for lubrication, after which he wraps the bowl in a towel and puts it aside. The next day he changes the towel, and continues doing this for about a month or more. By this method he can have a finished, dry, crack free bowl in about six weeks.

Next was the subject of boxes, which will be a new, additional category for the *Artistry in Wood* show this year. Although the Show Chair



**You flat-work guys, you spend a month just drawing up a design. Then you go and spend hundreds of dollars on fancy wood, plane it, cut out all those pieces, put 'em together, and six months down the road you might have a finished product. I pick up a *free* piece of wood on the side of the road, and I'll have a bowl by dinnertime.**



outside of his bowls texture (saves on sanding) and particularly likes the effect milk paint has

has stated that lids were not a requirement, Hugh holds a different opinion. He favors a snug, well-fitting lid, and often uses an indexing pin to ensure correct orientation and maintain that good fit.

Milk paint and Deft oil are his favorite finishes. The Deft oil is a tung-based Danish oil finish, but is sadly no longer available, so he is rationing out what's left of his supply. Hugh likes to give the



on that texture. He tops off the milk paint with Deft oil, and often sands through the milk paint in spots to expose the underlying wood. The milk paint reacts with tannic acid in woods that contain it, and darkens the wood. Exposing this wood can present a nice surprise of color.





Carving is the ultimate texture. Hugh does most of his carving with the piece sitting on his lap, sometimes using a small veiner, sometimes a power tool. Carving is his relaxation. Hugh has a number of different power carving options. One is a Flexcut. Another is a Foremost high speed micromotor that runs up to 50,000 RPM. It is brushless and the speed is adjustable.

Holding up a partially completed ginkgo vessel to illustrate, he described the process. First of all, he collected a pile of ginkgo leaves, then traced them onto some rubber frisket, which he cut



into individual leaf patterns. He arranged these over the surface of the vessel until he had something that pleased him. Then he traced around each one, peeled them off, and carved the design with his micromotor and a 3/32" burr.

After a warm round of applause for Hugh, he surprised the audience with one more item to show. He also happens to turn duck calls, and pulled one from his pocket for a demonstration. Quack, quack, quack!!!





Marquetry is a technique in which different colors of wood veneers are carefully cut to fit precisely together in a design. The idea that one can paint a picture using the natural colors of wood is ancient. In the mid-sixteenth century, Italian craftsmen started using marquetry as furniture decoration, beginning a long history that still thrives today. During the process of completing a project, students will learn the double-bevel method of marquetry. This highly accurate technique eliminates gaps around individual pieces of the marquetry picture.

# BEGINNING MARQUETRY

## WITH GREG ZALL

Friday, Saturday and Sunday July 6 -8, 2018

9:00am to 5:30pm

Fee: \$390.00

Location: 1890 Middle Two Rock Road  
Petaluma, California

I will provide all the tools you will need to use, along with a variety of veneers in many fun textures and colors.

In addition, I will be able to show you the nuts and bolts of how I work on projects in my shop. It is an idyllic setting - an old barn surrounded by rolling fields and a few lazy cows.

Come and learn or hone your marquetry skills at my shop in beautiful Petaluma. This class is taught with scroll saws, and I have enough for seven people. Class is limited, so sign up early to assure a spot.



To register, or  
if you have questions,  
contact me at:  
[greg@gregzall.com](mailto:greg@gregzall.com)

Shop 707 762 6106

Cell 707 761 3494

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

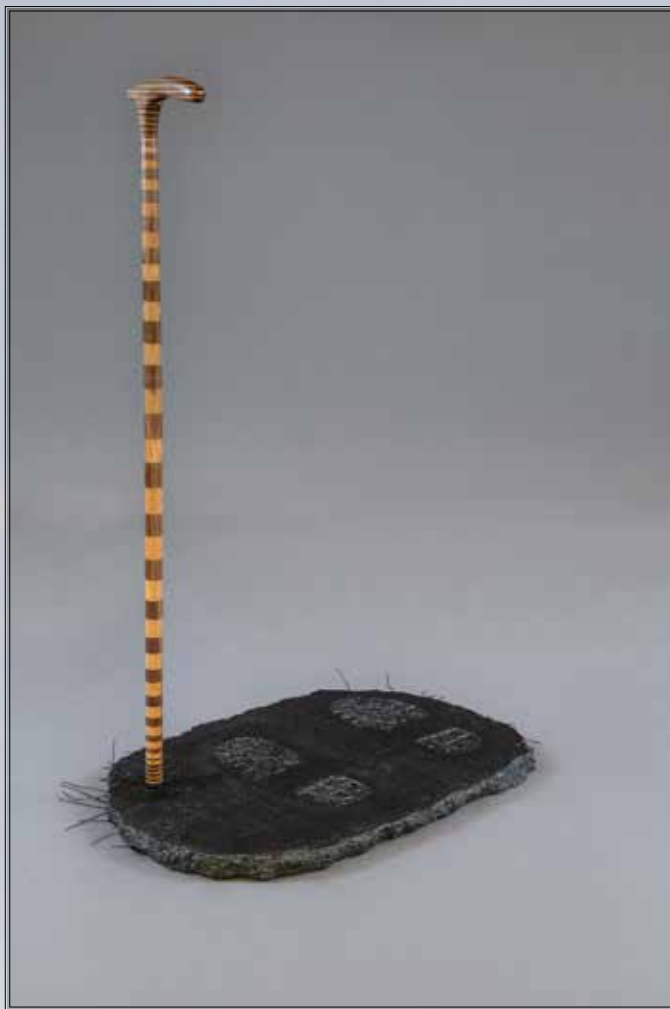
Hope you can make it!



There are five months until  
*Artistry in Wood*  
2018.



*Untitled Bowl* by David Marks



*Peripheral Neuropathy* by Harvey Newman



*High Seas in the Bathtub - Blue Wave* by David Stohl



*Zippered Cabinet* by Michael Palace



*Wave Bowl* by Alan Brickman

So, what are you working on?

## Officers of the Association

<u>Chairman</u>	Tom Vogel	<u>Secretary</u>	Lars Andersen
<u>Program Chair</u>	Chuck Root	<u>Guild Chair</u>	Mark Tindley
<u>Treasurer</u>	Judith Garland	<u>Show Chair</u>	Don Jereb
<u>Editor</u>	Joe Scannell	<u>Web Master</u>	Rod Fraser

*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](mailto: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