



# WOOD FORUM

Newsletter of the Sonoma County Woodworkers Association

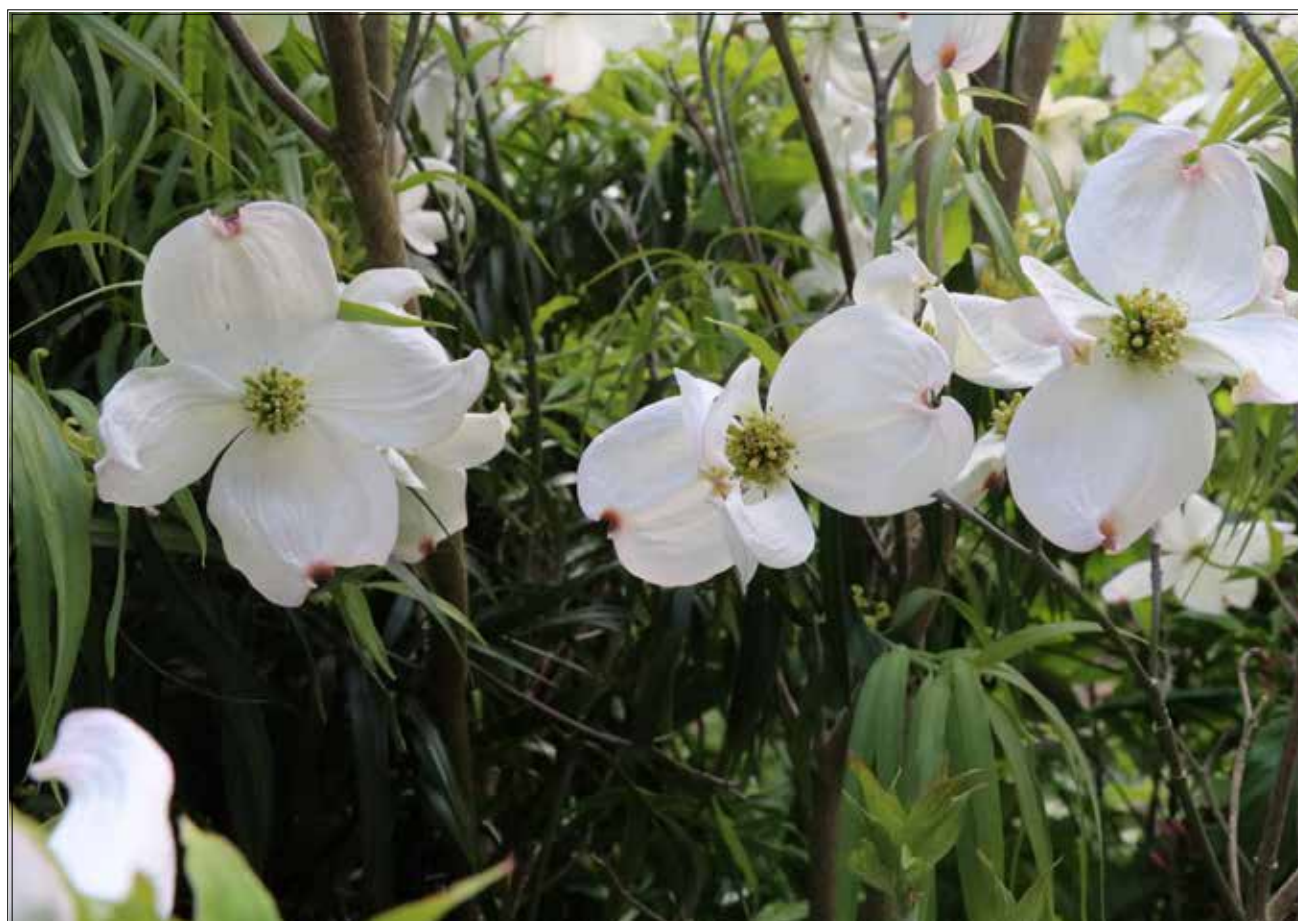
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## Maybe April?

It's been another difficult winter for all of us, but perhaps the end is in sight. That's the hope of your SCWA Board, who are hoping to schedule an in-person meeting in April.

Have an idea for a presentation you would like to see? Let us know.



*Photo by José Cuervo*

The AiW 2021 Show photos are available for download from our Google Drive account, using the link that was emailed to our members recently. Please note that since that email went out, eight more photos have been added, so if you were looking for one of those but couldn't find it, go back to the webpage and look again.

[https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1a\\_KcpEnnXsLqhc6fuISo8-2kBuGbDouF?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1a_KcpEnnXsLqhc6fuISo8-2kBuGbDouF?usp=sharing)





# In Memoriam

A note from Greg Zall

**M**y friend **Richard Miller** has gone to the great woodworking shop in the sky, where wood never tears out and you only have to measure once. He left us peacefully in his bed at the age of 89.

After making his fortune in real estate and construction, he was able to retire at a very early age and devote a large part of his life to his passion for woodworking. It was evident if you ever visited him - Altendorf Table saw, Felder planer, CNC machine, all top-of-the-line machines and all crammed into his small shop at his home in Healdsburg.

Richard's work was eccentric, creative - odd explorations into his current esthetic interest or his current mechanical challenge. Many of the projects turned into adventures, often requiring expert help or lessons from one master or another. I lived vicariously, watching him travel to woodworking destinations, one time traveling to Italy to apprentice with an Italian master where he learned and built a drop ceiling. He then had it shipped to his (other) home in San Francisco and installed in the entrance way. Another time he studied and built a spiral staircase that he installed in his home. It dead-ended into the ceiling of his one story flat, and of course was titled "A Staircase to Nowhere."



We had many collaborations, especially as he got older and was unable to accomplish the intricacies of his designs. I have included a picture of one our last pieces. It is a lamp constructed from a natural branch with abalone panels for the light to shine through.

I will miss his visits with discussions about proportions and designs. I will remember him hopping out of his Jaguar in his torn beat-up Tyvek coveralls. He added an unusual spark to my life, as special as "the color purple" (a metaphor Richard would have appreciated).







And a note from Mark Tindley...

Richard Miller was no ordinary client - and so much the better for it. The last time I saw him he was very frail and not doing well at all - but he was still determined to show me how to properly sharpen a veneer saw. He'd often call and ask how my projects were going or ask if he could help out with anything we were doing. He loved looking over our project drawings before a commission was started and telling us how we should do it - inevitably he'd done something similar once or twice! Richard had just as much fun woodworking for himself as he did watching other woodworkers help him make stuff. His projects were always a bit bonkers and it was endless fun working out how to execute them. He once had me build him a solid-maple kitchenette above his workshop - excessively complicated with angled cabinets in an absurdly tight space - the biggest challenge was building everything around the heating ducts that he wouldn't let me move! It looked pretty decent when done...but then he decided to hide it all behind some big pine doors so you couldn't tell it was there. His son showed me those doors recently and they stopped my drawers from opening! But you could never be mad at the man - he was far too entertaining for that - we'd just book him in for the next little oddity and we'd all be happy to bring something else to fruition.



Editor's note:

According to Larry Stroud, Richard won the award for **Best Small Piece** in the 2001 *Artistry in Wood Show*. It was called "Architectural Jewelry Box." Alas, there are no known photographs to share.

And Mark adds:

I believe that many moons ago Richard Miller won an **Award of Excellence** for an incredible domed building with drawers in it. Again, sadly, no photos.



# 2021 Makers Meeting

by Joe Scannell

The December 14, 2021 Makers Meeting got underway promptly at 7pm in the Sonoma County Art Museum, with a very respectable turnout, especially considering the public health threats still ravaging our world.

Show Chair **Don Jereb** opened the evening, our second in-person meeting since March 2020, by saying that this was to be our SCWA Annual Meeting, the time provided in our Bylaws for the election of board members for the coming year.

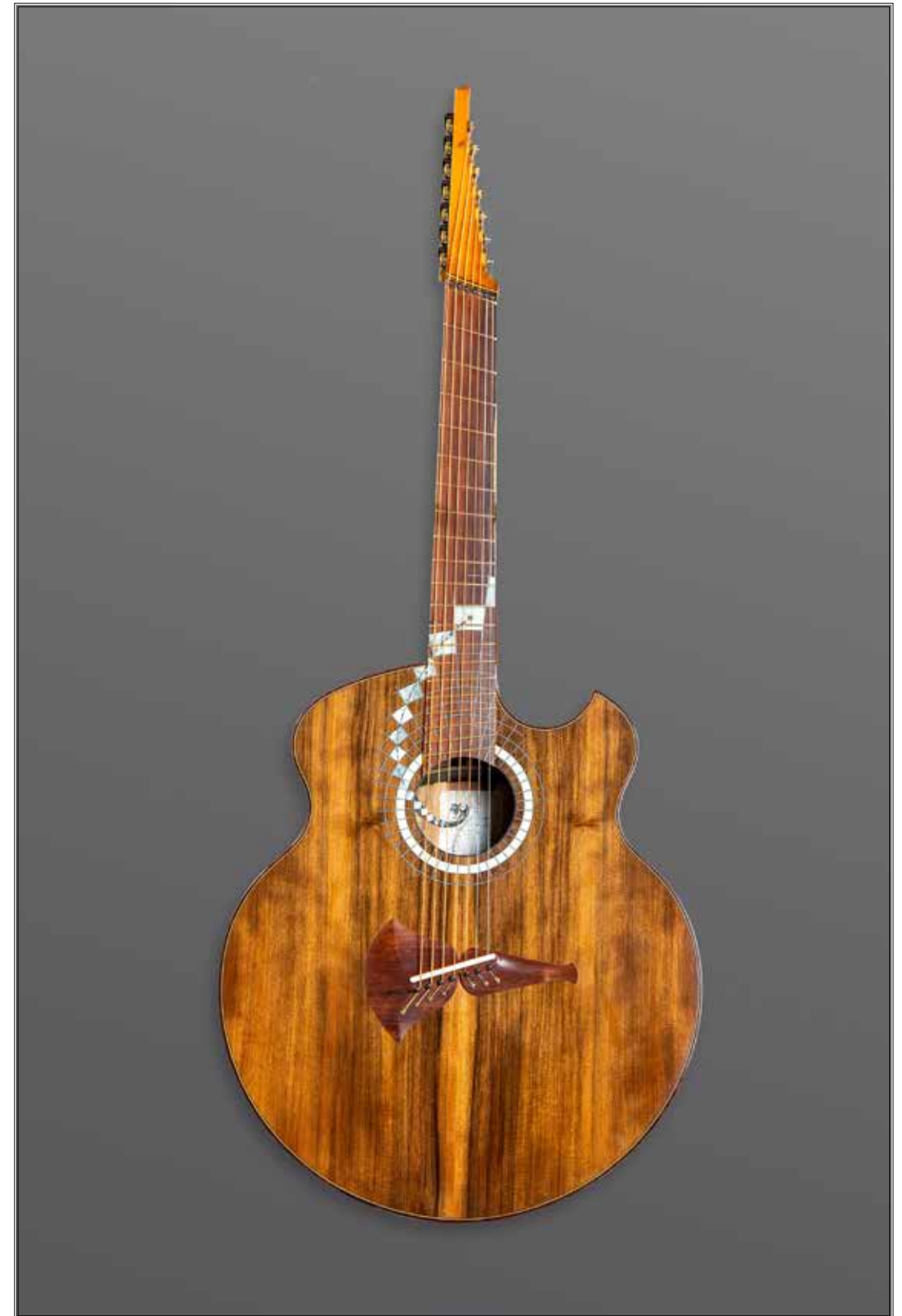
With that in mind, Don asked for volunteers for the position of Board Chair. No one responded.

This was followed by a quick financial report from Treasurer **Judi Garland**. The Association current has \$17,337.36 in the bank. Money that came in from Show entry fees roughly equaled Show expenses for things such as photography and judges.

Don said we are hoping to try to hold quarterly meetings starting in March, which brought up the next subject, the empty Program Chair position. **Chuck Root**, who held the position a few years ago, gave a brief description of the duties. With that, a new member, **Dave Weber**, said he would tackle the job if Chuck Root would mentor him.

After the applause died down, Don said it was time to start the Makers portion of the evening. He said that only entries whose makers were present would be discussed.

The first entry was our **Best of Show**, a guitar entitled *Fibonacci*, and made by **Steve Klein**. He gave a rundown of the materials used in the spectacular instrument: myrtle (bay laurel) back and sides; Guatemalan rosewood back and fretboard; redwood top; Port Orford cedar neck; ivory; and California abalone shell used to create the decorative Fibonacci sequence that playfully dances around the top.



*Fibonacci* by Steve Klein - **Best of Show**

*Photo by Debbie Wilson*



The next entry to be discussed was by **David Marks**, and entitled *Ocean*. While difficult to discern from the photograph, this is a large dome that is three feet in diameter and 8" deep. The underlying structure was turned on the lathe, then veneered with spectacular quilted mahogany from "The Tree." \*

David worked on this piece on and off for nearly a decade, when a buyer from Texas offered to buy it. He went to work on it with renewed enthusiasm, and finished it for the Show. It will be shipped to Texas a week after *Artistry in Wood* closes.

The various sea creatures are all inlaid, using materials including ebony, betel nut, tagua nut, mother of pearl, pau shell, green rippled abalone, black lip MOP, and various dyed stabilized pen blanks.



*Ocean* by David Marks - **Best of Art**

\*If you, like me, had never heard of "The Tree", may I direct you to the website <https://www.stewmac.com/video-and-ideas/online-resources/reference/the-tree-the-most-notorious-tonewood-in-the-world/>.

**Dave Bohl** is a newcomer to the area, arriving in Forestville in 2020 on the same day Governor Newsom ordered the COVID-19 lockdown. He had a career in architectural photography on the East Coast, and had seen and photographed a lot of beautiful furniture and buildings. After arriving in California, he was walking on a beach one night with some friends and saw something sticking out of the sand. They tried to dig it out, but the tide came in and defeated their efforts.

Undeterred, he went back with a shovel a few days later and resumed the excavation. The object was very heavy, and was embedded with sand and rocks. Using hand tools almost exclusively, he extracted the creature he calls the *Alien Hitchhiker*. Dave says he tries to show hand of man in nature. As Don Jereb pointed out, there are many different creatures here, depending upon where you're standing.



*The Alien Hitchhiker* by Dave Bohl

Photos by Debbie Wilson



*Red Gum Eucalyptus Bowl by Steve Forrest*

**Steve Forrest** turned a block of red gum eucalyptus that he got from David Marks in exchange for some labor. When he was finished making the piece, he brought the finished vessel to show Marks, and another friend of David's was there. The friend also admired the finished piece, and asked if it was for sale. He bought it on the spot, giving Steve immediate positive feedback on the quality of his work. The bowl is completely round on the bottom; Steve made a platform on which to display it using gaboon ebony. The bowl received an **Award of Excellence**.

**Bob Nelson** spoke about his spalted liquidambar bowl that he entitled *Fungus Among Us*. He had acquired the wood a couple of years before, then left it neglected in his yard, where Nature went to work on it (the wood was not spalted when he got it). The resulting bowl is a tribute to Mother Nature as well as to Bob's artistry. It received an **Award of Excellence**.



*Photos by Joe Scannell*

*Fungus Among Us by Bob Nelson*





*Photo by Debbie Wilson*

*Crowning Glory  
by Charlie Saul*

**Charlie Saul** had two pieces to discuss this evening, both of which won **Awards of Excellence**. The first, entitled *Crowning Glory*, was a large turned vessel he made from a Mappa burl that grew on the historic Comstock House Lombardy poplar. Mappa burl is very soft and lightweight, so Charlie chose to leave the turning relatively thick to give it a better feel, and to preserve the natural edges seen around the top. The top features hand-chased threads in manzanita.

Charlie's second piece was a hollow form, completely finished inside and out, featuring a California diamondback rattlesnake coiled over the top. He wanted to create a basket illusion. Made from sycamore, the wood was treated to considerable carving, pyrography, and color.



*Photos by Joe Scannell*



*California Diamondback Rattlesnake by Charlie Saul*

**Don Ketman** had an odd-shaped wedge of walnut with a rotted pith, that, as he put it, kicked around his garage for 10 years before he finally took a chainsaw to it because no one was there to stop him. The result was this lovely hollow form, *Cleft of Center*, made of walnut and ash.

Don also had another entry that he called *Whimsy*. He received a 6x6x8 madrone burl from a friend. He squared up the piece, glued on some poplar waste material, and turned it round. Then he cut off the poplar and finished shaping it with a rasp and other hand tools. It received an **Award of Excellence**.



*Whimsy* by Don Ketman

*Photo by Joe Scannell*



*Cleft of Center* by Don Ketman

*Photo by Debbie Wilson*



**Don Jereb** got his inspiration for these chairs from Dutch designer Gerrit Rietveld, who in 1963 was commissioned by the Steltman Jewelry Store in The Hague to make a mirrored pair of chairs meant for young couples choosing wedding rings. Don set out to make *A Comfortable Interpretation of Gerrit Rietveld's Steltman Chairs* nearly three years ago, and produced the prototype seen below for our August barbecue in 2019.



*A Comfortable Interpretation of Gerrit Rietveld's Steltman Chairs* by Don Jereb - **Best of Furniture**

*Photo by Debbie Wilson*

The final version of his design is much more comfortable and easy on the eye, with sculpted seats and curved surfaces. The claro walnut lumber came from one tree, grown in the Capay Valley area. The various components are bookmatched across both chairs, enhancing the charm of the pair.

Don explained how he embedded steel angle iron and 5/8" rods inside the claro walnut, using epoxy, to produce the very robust (and comfortable) chairs. They were awarded the **Best of Furniture** for the Show.

*Photo by Joe Scannell*



*Photos by Debbie Wilson*

His third entry was in the **Furniture** category. Starting with a distinctly twisted piece of curly maple, he declared it to be a door, and built a small wall-hung mahogany cabinet to fit it.

**Ralph Carlson** received an Award of Excellence for his entry, *Display Box*, which is a bold expansion of the concept of what a box can be. While not capacious, Don assured us that it could hold a small can of the beverage of your choice. He credits the Game of Thrones for his design inspiration. He fabricated everything on the piece, including the extensive brass linkages and gears that make this playful piece fully functional. He has a prototype that he says will open to expose a 14" bottle of wine.

Ralph had two other entries as well. Some time ago he had trimmed an apple tree, and kept the twigs, waiting for an idea. When that idea arrived, he combined the twigs with some spalted maple, producing the lovely small box, lower right, which received an Award of Excellence.



*Photo by Joe Scannell*



Always on the prowl for special wood, **John Cobb** got this burl from an oak log destined to be cut up for firewood. Named *Sovereign* to honor the centuries-old oaks of northern California, he turned it green and allowed it to warp.



*Sovereign* by John Cobb

*Photo by Joe Scannell*



*Islands #1* by Harvey Newman

*Photo by Debbie Wilson*

**Harvey Newman** bought a large (8'x6'x3") redwood burl a few years ago, and this table, *Islands #1*, is a slab from that burl. The entry received an **Award of Excellence**. He made a minimalist base of steam-bent ash, but he is not completely happy with it. This was his first attempt at steam bending, and the ash was kiln dried. Next time he will use air-dried.



*Writing Table by Alex Hunt*

*Photo by Debbie Wilson*

**Alex Hunt** had some slabs of claro walnut in storage, but after the Tubbs fire the wisdom became “use your best wood first.” Starting with a 10’ slab, he trimmed it to rough size, saving the offcuts to make rest of the table. He brought the slab to a shop with a CNC router and had it flattened, then trimmed to a profile that he drew. Then he took it to another friend, who had a 48” sander. It took 10 minutes to make the top perfect. The rest was just standard hard work. *Writing Table* received an **Award of Excellence**.

Alex had a second entry that also received an **Award of Excellence**. Entitled *Growth*, it is a series of spheres increasing Fibonacci-like in diameter, an illustration of the basic patterns of growth in plants and populations.



*Growth by Alex Hunt*

*Photo by Joe Scannell*



**Dominique Charmot** received an **Award of Excellence** for his cherry armchair and desk set, designed with a flowing branch-like structure as seen in nature.

The joinery was quite challenging. He used mainly dowels and screws, and did much of the later shaping with a disk sander.



He starts with a lamination of 5 or 6 pieces of 1/16" veneer in various colors. The veneer sandwich is placed in a jig, and the router rides on a sinuousoidal ramp within the jig, which causes a varying depth of cut as it travels over the veneer. After each traversal the ramp is offset 1/2" in both the X and Y axes. Using this technique, he produced a number of small jewelry boxes as gifts for his recent trip to France.

This box is built from eight such veneer sandwiches. A hidden button releases a magnetic latch, allowing the box to be opened on a ball bearing slide mechanism, revealing five tiny drawers inside.



*Photos by Debbie Wilson*

Dominique won the **Best Box** category for his second entry, which he named *Monolith*. In the past year he had been experimenting with a technique for creating a textured surface using a router and a 3/8" round nose bit.







**Joe Scannell** started building his elm bed April, 2015, with help from **Bob Roudman** and **Walt Doll**. It was Joe's first (and only) experience with steam bending, and the three of them pulled it off successfully.

He worked on a marquetry panel (featuring a pair of pintail ducks) for the footboard throughout that summer, then was distracted for several years by other things.

Finally, in the summer of 2020 he cut out all the bed frame parts, and in October of 2020 he began

the headboard marquetry, which he completed the following March. When he went back and looked at the original footboard panel, the work looked too primitive, so he decided to do an entirely new panel, with a similar theme but more complicated.

The second marquetry panel was begun in April, 2021, and completed in September. Then disaster struck - a glue-up gone terribly wrong, which Joe explained was why the whole, completed bed was not in the show. More to follow.



*Photos by Debbie Wilson*





*Krenov Cabinet by Lucinda Daly*

*Photo by Debbie Wilson*

**Lucinda Daly** is a recent graduate of the College of the Redwoods, but as she tells it, after two years there she hadn't made anything resembling the Krenov style. Recently, she decided to go "full Krenov" on a project, and the result was this lovely cherry spice cabinet for her daughter, which received an **Award of Excellence**.

She used the signature Krenov dowel construction and solid wood throughout. The single board door is curved, which gave her the opportunity to finally use the curved bottom plane she made at the school.

The rosewood shelf supports are handmade. The drawer has a rosewood face, a cedar bottom, and maple sides. She made the brass hardware, and the rosewood "clicker-clacker" latch ala Krenov. The finish is shellac only.

**Paul Feinstein** spoke about his *Hand Slicer*, turned from an 18x9" brown malle burl, sometimes called coulibah, that he brought back from Australia. He wished the blank had been thicker so he could have gotten a full sphere. The finish is oil.

The title, *Hand Slicer*, derives from the nerve wracking experience of turning this kind of shape at 1000 rpm.



*Hand Slicer by Paul Feinstein*

*Photo by Joe Scannell*

**Paul Marini** and his wife honeymooned in Costa Rica in 1994, and being bird lovers they became enamored of the country. They actually saw a quetzal, which was very rare. When Paul was deliberating on this project he knew he wanted to include a harpy eagle, which is the heaviest eagle in the world, with a six foot wingspread, and has the longest talons of any raptor. It has a headress that it can raise up in an impressive display.

The life-size carved eagle is actually several pieces of wood dowelled together, which enabled Paul to take it apart and work on individual sections at a time. It started out at over 100 lbs, and he carved it down to 28 lbs. It's completely hollow. To make the feathers, Paul started with 3/32" basswood, from which he bandsawed each feather, then held each one to an orbital sander to make it thinner, so that it became a real "feather."

Opposite the eagle is a carved quetzal, whose tail is 31" long and comprises 14 feathers. Below that is a lineated woodpecker with 3 babies. Moving to the left, we see a Costa Rican orange nectar bat, which is attracted to foul smelling flowers. The entire sculpture is made of basswood, except for three gaboon ebony tadpoles.

Paul introduced **Elise Durenberger**, an artist and painter from Petaluma. They have collaborated on many of his projects over the years.

The snake in the clutches of the harpy eagle has 9000 individual scales burned into it using the Mike Stinnett scale burning technique.

At the top can be seen a green breasted mango hummingbird visiting a Purple Country Girl flower, the national flower of Costa Rica.

The hollow tree stands 78" high and is made from six pieces of basswood.

*In the Rain Forest* by Paul Marini

*Photo by Debbie Wilson*





**Steve Hamner** discussed his latest project, a working radio that he has given the title *Reports of the Death of Radio Have Been Exaggerated*, a play on the Mark Twain quote. It is basically a small cabinet with a computer inside that uses wifi to go to a website that has 8,000 radio stations for your listening pleasure. It was given an **Award of Excellence**.

The 8 x 8 x 19" cabinet was built with solid woods including koa, ebony, madrone, black acacia; veneers of walnut and madrone burl; and baltic birch plywood. Half-blind dovetails and hide glue hold everything together. The finish is OSMO and wax.

The tambour slats are not cloth-backed or connected with wire. Rather, they are made in an interlocking shape, using a jig and special router bit.

Steve drew our attention to the shape of the front green center panel, which is in the shape of a tombstone. He said that the old radios made in the 20s & 30s were often that shape, and were thus referred to as tombstone radios.



*Reports of the Death of Radio Have Been Exaggerated* by Steve Hamner

*Photo by Debbie Wilson*



*Photo by Debbie Wilson*

**Don Jereb** was called upon to speak again, this time about his *Moebius Tangle #2*, which received an **Award of Excellence**. Don has been making these whimsical whirligigs for several years and is actively selling them. This one is 7.5 feet high and about 4 feet in diameter, and is made from steam bent cherry, walnut, and Alaskan yellow cedar.

His technique is to steam each thin strip of wood, then quickly twist it a half turn to create a single-sided plane. He clamps the overlapping ends temporarily together. Further twisting and bending is done to make each piece unique, then he lets them dry and further distort. Finally, he creates a scarf joint which he joins with glue.

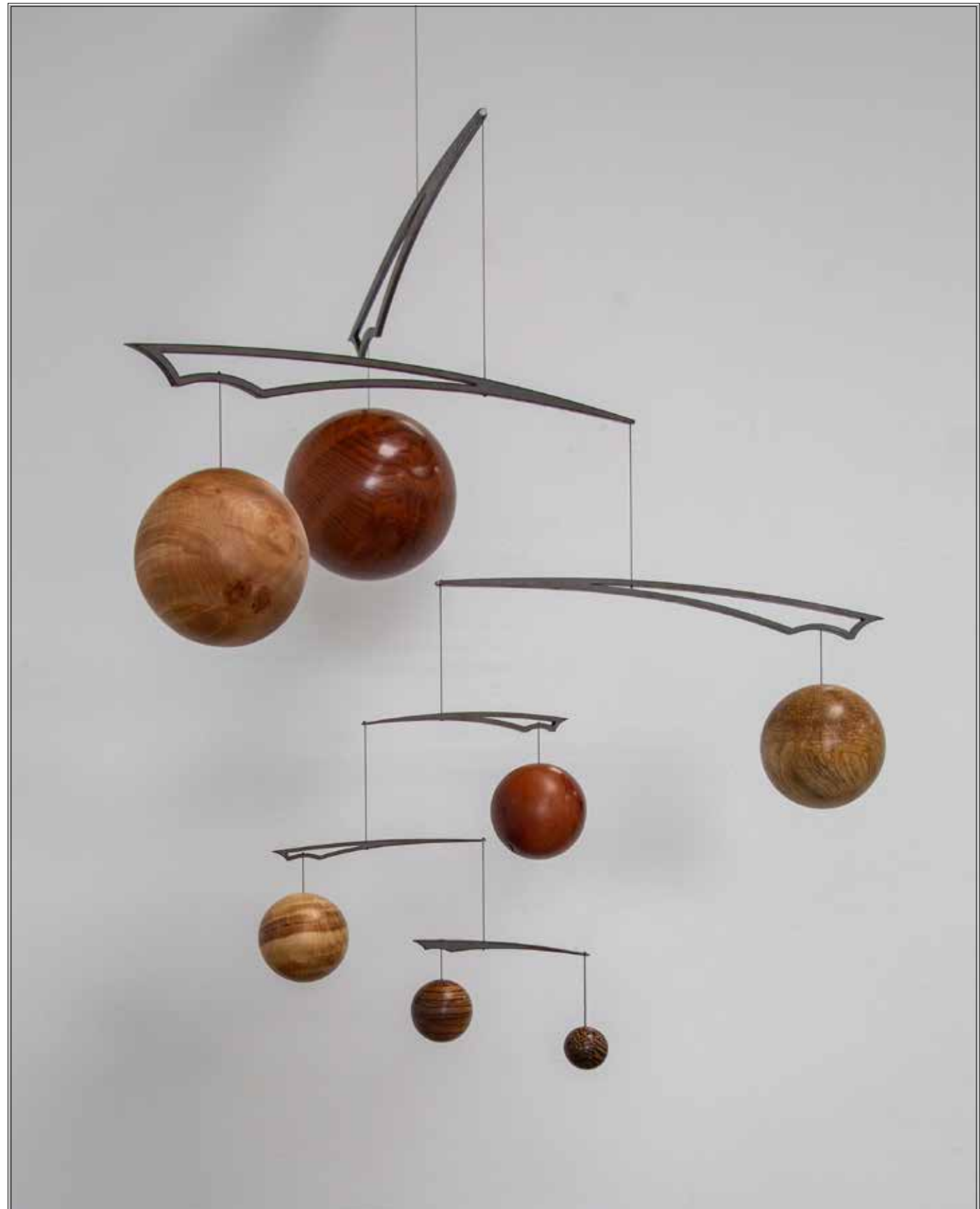


**Steve Forrest** also spoke again, this time about a project he collaborated on with **Don Jereb** and **Harvey Newman** they called *Alternate Universe*, and which won the **Best of Miscellaneous** category. The design concept came from Don, Steve made the spheres, and Harvey (who Steve hadn't even met until this evening) created the metal armatures that support the piece.

Steve turned the spheres using a variety of woods: redwood, silver maple, spalted willow, madrone, bay laurel, zebrawood, and black palm.

Harvey designed the metal armatures and had them cut in Reno. The cutting process left a nice black line around the edges. Steve described the black lines as “a happy accident.”

Don described the building process as a progressive balancing act, started by balancing the bottom element on its string, then adding it to the next element up and balancing that, and so on to the top.



*Photo 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](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 \_\_\_\_\_

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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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