



# WOOD FORUM

Newsletter of the Sonoma County Woodworkers Association

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## Unfettered Imagination

Our first meeting of the new year will be held at the Sonoma County Museum, where a solo exhibition of the work of SCWA member Michael Cooper opened on December 10.

Michael is a renowned artist, sculptor, and educator, equally at home with metal, wood, and many other materials as well. Who can forget the *Clown Car*, seen at the 2018 *Artistry in Wood* show? Or *The Calculated and Systematic Dismantling and Sinking of Blue Collar Workers*, displayed at the show in 2019 and which garnered **Best of Show**.



On Tuesday, January 10, 2023, we will assemble at the Museum for a personal tour of the exhibition by the artist himself. The show starts at 7pm, and promises to be a memorable evening.





# Annual Meeting

December 6, 2022

The Annual Meeting got off to a good start when Harvey Newman volunteered to run for the empty Chairman position on the Board. A nomination was quickly made, a vote taken, and Harvey was unanimously elected to serve as the Board Chairman for the coming year. This was followed by a vote to reelect the other board members, all of whom said they were willing to serve for another year.

Treasurer Judi Garland was unable to attend the evening's meeting due to a family emergency, so Don Jereb read a synopsis of her annual budget report. Our financial status is essentially unchanged from the previous year.

Assets:	\$17,530.71	
Liabilities:	0.00	
Income:	1,225.00	(dues)
	1,575.00	(Show income)
Expenses:	1,650.00	(Show expenses)
	661.17	(Comm.)
	180.00	(P.O. Box)
Net:	\$193.35	

A reminder was put forward to everyone present (and to you, Gentle Reader) that we want to resume having meetings on a regular basis again. This frequently entails hiring a guest speaker, the funds for which are clearly standing by (see Treasurer's Report at left). What we, the Board, need are suggestions for who to bring in. Who would you like to hear from? Who would you take a class from if you could afford it? What subjects interest you in particular? We have in the past brought people from significant distances, and while we cannot do it every month, a couple of times a year will not break the bank. So, help us out with your suggestions.

With that business out of the way, the evening moved on to the featured speaker, our own Mark Tindley, SCWA Guild Chair and co-founder of Two Rock School of Woodworking, in whose fine establishment we were meeting. Mark would discuss some of the less common hand planes found in woodworking, and techniques he has found useful in their application.

As Mark pointed out, many of these "specialty" planes wind up in the hands of tool collectors, seldom or never to be used, which is a shame because often they offer a much safer or more efficient means of doing some operations on a piece of wood. Particularly when only one or a few pieces are needed, it may be quicker to use a plane than to spend the time setting up a router to do the same thing, and it's certainly a lot quieter.

He began by discussing grooves, a common feature needed in furniture. Whether you are making a groove, widening a

groove, or deepening a groove, there is a plane for that purpose. With that, he introduced us to the Stanley No. 55, a plane with many dozens of cutters, multiple fences and stops, rods and other parts, all held together



with rods and screws. Stanley's idea was that this would replace dozens of molding planes, hollows and rounds, etc. As Mark put it, "This plane was designed as a





specialty plane. Unlike other specialty planes that can do one or two things really well, but nothing else, the Stanley No. 55 can do one or two things really well, and 500 things really badly."

The No. 55 is very collectible because it's very pretty looking - lots of levers, cams, adjustments, fences (including some that tilt, for chamfers), curved bits, etc., all topped off with rosewood grips. Engineering beauty in a box.

Stanley's plan was to convince its customers to discard their old wooden planes, replacing them with the No. 55. But it just didn't happen. For one thing, the wooden planes were better at their jobs. And for another, it took an enormous amount of time to change blades and set everything up. And it's heavy, but not in a good way.



*Single depth stop on Stanley No. 50*

In Mark's workflow the 55 doesn't get a lot of use, for the simple reason that he also has a No. 50, which is a greatly scaled-down version of the No. 55, with far fewer cutters and options, but with much better blade support.

With that, he set up the No. 55 as a plough plane, to cut a groove in a demo board. He mentioned that the 55 had one advantage over the No. 50 - it has depth stops on *both* sides of the blade, which tends to prevent tilting the tool while planing. But he feels the blade retention/adjustment design on the No. 50 is far superior to the simpler one used in the No. 55 design.

Mark said that the reason these planes wind up in the hands of tool collectors instead of woodworkers is because most people use them backwards. With most planes, you begin planing at one end of the board, and planing with the grain proceed to the other end of the board. With these planes you begin at the *end* side of the board, again following the grain, and step backwards in short steps until you reach the starting point. This way you are only taking small, short cuts,

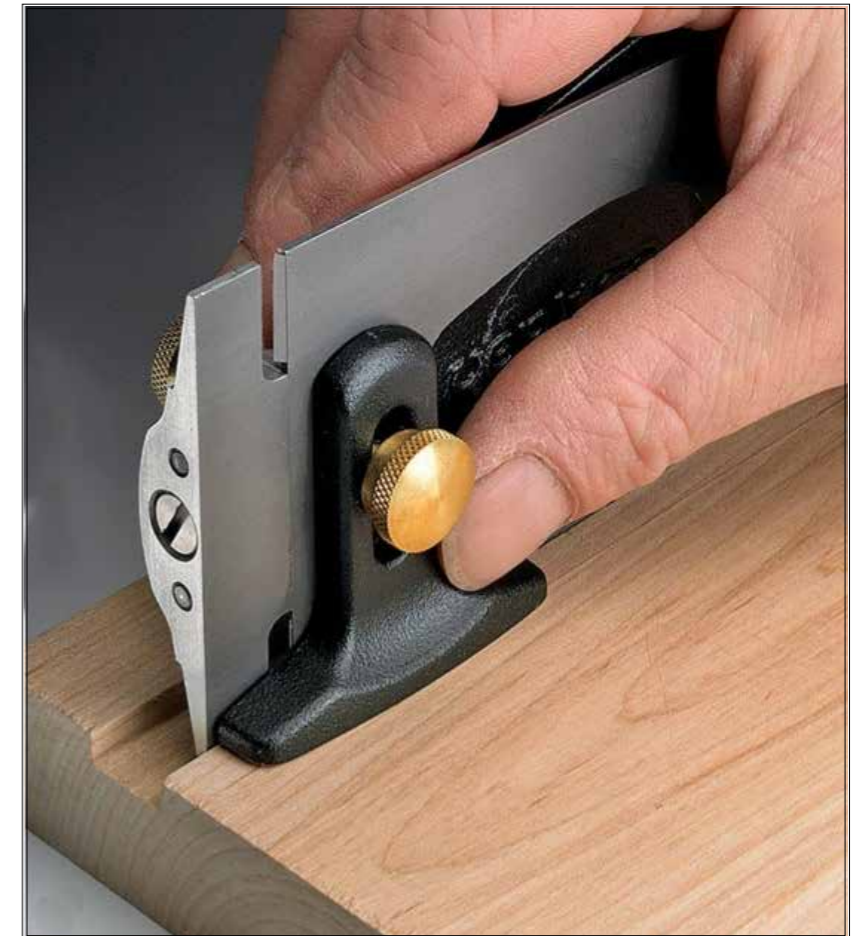
which allows you to clean out the shavings which inevitably would clog the mouth if used in the usual way. To prove this point, he demonstrated the plane. It was a workout, but he got the job done.

The cutters come in an array of shapes and sizes, but if you're ploughing a groove there is a limit to how wide a cutter you can use efficiently; the wider ones just offer too much resistance, so you're better off making multiple passes with a narrower cutter.

Mark spoke a bit about the business of making plywood fit in a groove. Some folks just cut an undersized

groove with a dado blade, then cut a rabbet on the plywood to make it fit. You can even use an undersized router bit to make the groove fit the plywood. And maybe it will, but with the wide range of plywood thicknesses these days, the odds aren't great.

The next plane on the stage was a side rabbet plane, known in Britain as a side rebate plane, used to widen an existing groove. These come in left and right versions, to accommodate grain in either direction. Another variation on this plane incorporates two blades in one body, such as the one seen below, from Veritas. This one sees a lot of use in Mark's shop; it's much quicker than re-setting up dado blades or a router, and more accurate as well.



*Side rabbet plane by Veritas*

The next plane under discussion was the bullnose plane, which Mark says he almost never uses. The idea is that the blade can get right into a corner, which it actually cannot do; there is always a bit out of reach because of the bullnose itself. Some types allow the bullnose to be removed, exposing the blade fully, but the result is uncontrollable digging in. Mark prefers a shoulder plane, which offers much more registration in front of the blade.



Many of the planes he had on display this evening have quite small blades, which makes for a difficult time sharpening. The solution to this is to effectively make the blade bigger by holding it in a hand vise clamp, and sharpening in your usual manner.



Next, he returned to the Stanley No. 50, with a bead cutter installed. Sometimes cutting beads this way is much more efficient than using a router, and the example he gave was a raised cabinet panel with a series of parallel beads across its face. To do this with a power router requires a cutter known as a radius beadboard bit, (photo below) and using it requires two setups to produce each bead. The No. 50 has finished the job while you're still setting up the next cut.

Continuing to mine in the vein of the unusual, Mark brought out a butt mortise plane, which is essentially a jack plane body with a huge mouth in front of the bevel-down blade. Used for installing locksets, hinges, strike plates, and not much else, it doesn't get a lot of use. Mark sees it more as a chisel in a plane body. He gave a demonstration in using it to set a hinge.



After setting the blade depth to equal the thickness of the hinge, and cutting in the outline of the mortise with a marking gage or a knife, the technique is to start at one end and take small bites with the blade/chisel across the mortise, stepping backwards with each bite. Then work the same way from the other end. Eventually you will have removed enough material that you may be able to actually take a shaving. At this point you can turn the plane sideways and clean up the corners, but of course a chisel will be a lot more efficient. Only a madman, or Mark, would persist in finishing this job with the plane. The advantage to this tool over just using a chisel is that it gives you depth control.

Asked which specialty plane he uses most, Mark quickly answered, "The router plane," which was next up for discussion. Basically the same as the butt mortise plane, with its large mouth, but with a round or oval sole shape, and L-shaped blades, this tool design eventually became the electric router.

In simplest terms a router plane is a stationary cutter that you have to push, mounted in a registration surface with the center left open. They come in small and large sizes, and with open throats (for better visibility) or closed (for better



support and registration). They all share two features: a height-adjustable cutter, and a depth stop to limit the cut to a repeatable depth.







*Veritas shoulder plane*



Another, even more useful plane on the bench is the shoulder plane, which is machined so that the sides are perfectly square to the sole, and the blades are ground to the same width as the body, and exposed to their full width. They were originally made to plane the end-grain shoulder on a tenon, to square it to the cheeks. In Mark's shop he prefers to use a chisel for this purpose, but he uses the shoulder plane to flatten the cheeks.

The last plane for the evening was the chisel plane, which is almost never used, and easily replaced by a crank-necked chisel. Its usefulness is for leveling something in the middle of a wide board or veneered surface, and in such situations a very thin cut is usually demanded. This usually requires a great deal of fussing with blade height to get it right, so once the plane is set up it's best to leave it alone until sharpening is needed. This plane is used not by pushing like an ordinary plane, but with a thin slicing cut.

The evening concluded with a fine round of applause for our host and presenter.



*Lie-Nielsen chisel plane*





# Bodger of the Month



**Stella Luna, woodworker**

## Officers of the Association

<u>Chairman</u>	Harvey Newman	<u>Secretary</u>	Lars Andersen
<u>Program Chair</u>	Dave Weber	<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 4663, Santa Rosa, CA 95402