



# WOOD FORUM

Newsletter of the Sonoma County Woodworkers Association

Volume 43, Issue 4

October 2023

## Mister Fixit

This month we will be trying something new for our organization: conducting our meeting online with a guest speaker who is 600 miles away. **Gary Rogowski** is the Director of The Northwest Woodworking Studio, in Portland, Oregon, where he has been making furniture since 1974. In 1979 he opened his shop up to the public for classes, which continue to this day.

Besides designing and building furniture, and conducting classes at a frightening pace, he also finds time to contribute articles to several woodworking magazines. If that's not enough, he has also written a book, *The Complete Illustrated Guide to Joinery*, which was released by Taunton Press in 2003, and has produced many woodworking DVDs and videos.

For our meeting at 7pm on Tuesday, October 10, 2023, Gary will discuss woodworking mistakes and how to fix them.



More information including a Zoom meeting access invitation will be emailed to you one week before the meeting.

You will need the Zoom app on your computer/tablet/or cell phone to access the meeting.

You can download it from:

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/4415294177549-Downloading-the-Zoom-desktop-client-and-mobile-app>



# Membership Meeting

## August 8, 2023

The meeting in the large classroom of the Two Rock School of Woodworking was called to order by **Show Chair Don Jereb**, who invited guests and new members to introduce themselves, which several did.

Don said that the evening's presentation, hand-chased threads, would begin after a few announcements and some show-and-tell by several members. He first reminded us that the 34th annual *Artistry in Wood* show is scheduled to run from November 17 through January 7, 2024. Entry drop-off day is November 9. The Guild will jury the entries on November 10, and the judges will weigh in on Tuesday, November 14. The show will be in the Art Museum building portion of the museum, with the opening reception set for the evening of Friday, November 17.

**SCWA Chair Harvey Newman** announced the establishment of a lister where members can communicate with other members on-line: pose questions, contribute answers or opinions, offer tools or materials for sale or free for the taking, etc.

**Mark Tindley** announced a full five-day woodworking handtool class coming up in early December at Two Rock School. No machine work whatsoever: the students will start with rough boards, hand plane them flat, lay out and cut joinery with handsaws, and produce benches with through mortise and tenon joints.

Two Rock School will also offer a couple of weekend beginners classes, the first in mid October, the second in January.

Additionally, the school will offer a two-day weekend sharpening class on February 10-11, and a three-day hand cut dovetail class in March. Also expect some more classes as they expand the number of instructors at the school. **David Marks** plans to teach a three-day marquetry class sometime around the end of the year;

no date has been set.

**Dan Stalzer**, the Marin County green-wood chair maker and College of the Redwoods graduate, is planning to conduct a five-day chairmaking class at the school, again sometime towards the end of the year.

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With the announcements over, Don introduced the first show-and-tell speaker for the evening, **Walt Doll**, who introduced us to his collection of Japanese waterstones. Walt is a member of Kezurou-Kai, an organization of people interested in learning and perpetuating the practice of hand tool woodworking. As such, he is a devout user of his waterstones, most of which are of natural origin.



Walt Doll

He got his first waterstone back in the 1980s, but really didn't know how to use it, and so it remained locked in a cabinet while he raised five children. Eventually that stone found daylight, and Walt applied himself to learning the techniques required.

Traditionally, a slurry is raised on the stone using a nagura stone, but Walt prefers to use a diamond plate, which also produces a slurry but maintains the flat surface of the waterstone as well.

Walt showed us several of the stones he uses, many of them extremely fine grit, some quite expensive. He refers to them as his "friends", with a story behind each. As he enjoys using Japanese tools, his many friends get a lot of bench time.

He seals the non-working surfaces of the stones with a furniture sealer, essentially a cashew lacquer. This prevents water damage to the stones, which are, of course, natural rocks that can crack or delaminate. He does not soak the stones; he just spritzes the top with water, then raises a slurry with the diamond plate, and when through he dries them and keeps them in a dry place.





Don Jereb

**Don Jereb** then showed us a lamp shade design he has been producing, basically a cylinder with 8 or 9 strips of thin wood bent similarly to his Möbius creations. The strips are attached around the top rim of the cylinder in a sort of floral explosion.

When he first began working on the design he had John Cobb turn a cylinder from solid timber, but obviously that approach required a LOT of wood. So he decided to use veneers to create the cylinder. He made a form using bending plywood, and using a pre-catalyzed glue (similar to Unibond 800) assembled several layers of veneer in a vacuum bag to form a hemisphere (not sure that's a word, but it should be). With two hemispheres in hand, he created a lap joint in each side and joined the two together. He then veneered the ends of his cylinder, and was done.



Well, not quite. He still had to cut a groove around the rim of the top, to securely house those squiggly wood strips. To do this, he created a jig that held a palm router horizontally while two side rails functioned as a vee block to hold the lamp shade cylinder horizontally as well. The height of the router was adjustable, making it easy to center the groove on the rim. Then it was just a matter of carefully feeding/rotating the shade over the 1/16" router bit. Easier said than done. But done, and well.

He has made four of these so far, and continues to refine the design. I'm guessing we'll see one in the *Artistry in Wood* show this winter.







*Andrew Carruthers*

**Andrew Carruthers** showed us an unusual viola that originated from an enquiry from a retired educator who was a lifelong player and wished to continue but was having difficulty doing so because of a shoulder problem. They discussed the situation, and Andrew concluded that what he really needed was an instrument with a twisted neck, so that he could reach the entire range without pain.

After much discussion, the professor felt the idea was a bit too far out, but Andrew was intrigued by the idea and built the instrument anyway.

It turned out to be more complicated than he first envisioned. He enlisted the help of Mike Center, who has a CNC machine, and Mike modeled the neck in software. They discovered that it would take a piece of ebony 1-3/4" thick. But they lucked out when they found something they could use in a dumpster! And the project went forward.

As it evolved, the geometry involving the strings presented the biggest hurdles. But after a lot of trial and error, Andrew emerged from his shop with a playable instrument, and he has had several people play it for evaluation. Oddly, one person didn't even realize the neck was twisted! But now he wants to have a professional musician, perhaps one with a shoulder problem, take the viola for a month and give it a workout, to see if the idea is worth pursuing further. He did an internet search for something similar, and found nothing. As he said, if an idea is any good, someone else has already done it. On the other hand, somebody has to be the first.





**Kalia Kliban** showed us a bowl she turned, made from ginkgo wood, which she says is a wonderfully stable wood, with a texture similar to basswood or limewood. She was in the process of giving the bowl feet, when the light showed off an unexpected undulation in the surface, which led to the unique shape of the feet and the bowl's bottom.

The finish is two coats of milkpaint, an undercoat of red and a topcoat of black, buffed a bit to reveal some of the red beneath, and finished with food-grade flaxseed oil from Whole Foods.

The wood is from the Ginkgo biloba tree, a honey colored wood. Because the bowl has four feet, it has been titled "Quadriloba."



*Kalia Kliban*



**David Marks** began the evening's featured presentation by saying the he *used* to be a furniture maker, but now that he's old (and looking for sympathy) he focuses on smaller and lighter projects such as boxes and turnings. To illustrate this, he passed around several small containers with lids, and spoke about the difficulty of getting a good tight-fitting lid that would remain functional year-round.



David has become an advocate for the negative-rake scraper, which is essentially a regular scraping tool with a second bevel ground on the opposite side - in effect, a skew laid on its side. An ordinary woodturning scraper tool has a flat top surface which is intended to be presented to the workpiece horizontally at the axis of rotation. The danger is that the cutting edge can occasionally dig in and ruin the work at the worst possible moment. The negative-rake makes the tool much less "grabby", especially in hard, dense wood.



*David Marks, semi-retired furniture maker*

This evening's demonstration would be the technique of freehand chasing threads for a lidded container. David chose African blackwood for the male and female threads, because it is one of the premiere woods for such a task. Stable, dense, fine-grained. Second only to English boxwood, which is difficult to obtain. Other woods David mentioned as suitable for thread chasing are mountain mahogany and mopani.

Because it is so finely grained, it is fairly easy to cut threads into endgrain. While not the strongest way

to orient the wood, it works with this wood. David's shopping tip: buy reject clarinet bells, which are blackwood with minor defects and good prices.

David credits **Allan Batty** with teaching him to cut threads. In 1999 Batty was touring Northern California and looking for a shop to host him. David quickly offered his. Over a weekend, Batty transformed a piece of boxwood into a charming little 20 tpi threaded box, and David was hooked. Batty gave the box to David, and he passed it around for all to see.





*The Elio Drive*

The clarinet bell reject is a rough four-sided pyramid, and thus difficult to mount in a lathe. David's solution is a device called the Elio Drive, an adjustable drive center with a #2 Morse taper mount. He mounted the bell as a spindle (long grain axially) and roughed it down with a spindle gouge (not a bowl gouge!) to a usable size and shape.



*Clarinet bell mounted between centers*



The usual sequence of operations is to cut the inside threads in the body first, then cut the external threads in the lid second. After preparing the blank, the process begins with mounting the blank in a chuck and hollowing the box, paying attention that the internal sidewalls are dead parallel; then cutting a recess in the internal side wall below the area where the threads will be located. This groove must be slightly deeper than the threads you will be cutting. The purpose of this groove is to provide an escape route for the tool as it advances into the blank. Without this, the tool would likely collide with the bottom, and since it is still engaged with the threads you've just cut, all those lovely threads would be quickly ripped out.

Another preparatory step is to cut a 45° chamfer on the inside of the rim of the box. This makes it much easier to get started. The idea is to sweep the tool into the cut in an arc at first, just to get some very shallow tracking on this chamfer. This track will then draw the tool into the cut on subsequent passes. Once the spiral thread pattern is established, the groove will actually draw the tool in. It's a matter of just making repeated light passes and feeding the tool straight in axially, not angled as with those starting passes. It is imperative to feed straight in, else you'll wind up with tapered threads. Remember, we are woodworkers, not plumbers.



David said that chasing tools come in various pitches, the most common being 12, 16, and 20 threads per inch. For tonight's demo, he used 16 tpi. The tool is essentially a scraper, and it is very important to use it so that the cutting edge is exactly at axis height. He uses a lathe speed of 300 rpm. Sharpening is a matter of very lightly touching the top of the tool to a grinder, giving it a very slight negative rake. Never grind the teeth themselves.



David's strategy is to turn the internal threads first, then rough the blank for the male threads about 1/8" larger in diameter than the internal bore. Then he cuts the male threads, and tries the fit. The idea is to sneak up on the fit through repeated cutting passes followed by testing the fit.



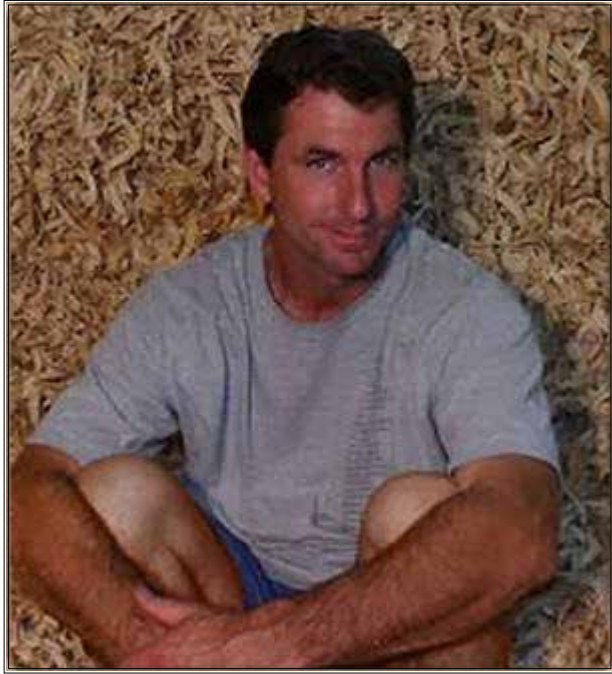
As he closed in on the perfect fit, David revealed his final trick for the evening. The box *just* threaded onto the male component; the fit was a little too tight for everyday use. He turned off the lathe, and rotated the work by hand while feeding the thread tool into the wood. In essence, he was lightly scraping the threads,

removing just enough to achieve perfection. A bit of wax on the threads, and it was time to go home. A warm round of applause filled the room.

*All photos are by Jose Cuervo*







**Mike Mahoney** has been a professional woodturner since 1994. His bowls are featured in galleries across the United States, and sought by collectors all over the world. Mike is often requested to demonstrate and teach for woodturning clubs, craft schools, and symposia.



**Robert Erickson** is an accomplished furniture maker from the Sierra foothills. His work is represented in various collections, including the Smithsonian’s Renwick Gallery, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the Yale University Art Gallery.

# Meet the Judges

## Artistry in Wood 2023



**Gary Smith**, Chair of the Board of Trustees, American Craft Council

### Important Dates:

Entry submission date to Museum	Thursday, Nov. 9
Guild entry evaluation day	Friday, Nov. 10
Entry Judging - Members' meeting	Tuesday, Nov. 14
Museum opening evening reception	Friday, Nov. 17
Show duration	Nov. 18, 2023 through Jan. 7, 2024

### Good news:

*The museum has moved our show to the Art Museum Gallery Building, which means we will have more room for entries. The Show Chair has raised the ceiling to three entries per person.*



# Napa Valley Art Association Open Studios



SCWA was represented by at least one member in the recent Napa Valley Art Association's "Open Studio" event, which spanned four days, September 16, 17, 23, and 24. For **Kent Parker**, the two weekends of open studio was a wonderful experience, one he would repeat "in a heartbeat." This Open Studios event is held once a year in Napa and is basically a self guided tour of the studios of up to 70 Napa artists.

Kent is a lapidarist as well as a woodworker, so his work on display included both wood and jewelry items. From a commercial standpoint it was a huge success for him. He had over 225 visitors and 20 sales, including an entry table he created just for the show. He also received two commissions.

Kent said the event was very well organized, and things ran smoothly. A nice color catalog of the exhibiting artists was produced that included a map for the locations of all the artists' studios. Artists then are responsible for distributing the catalogs at various locations throughout Napa, Sonoma and Marin counties to drum up interest.



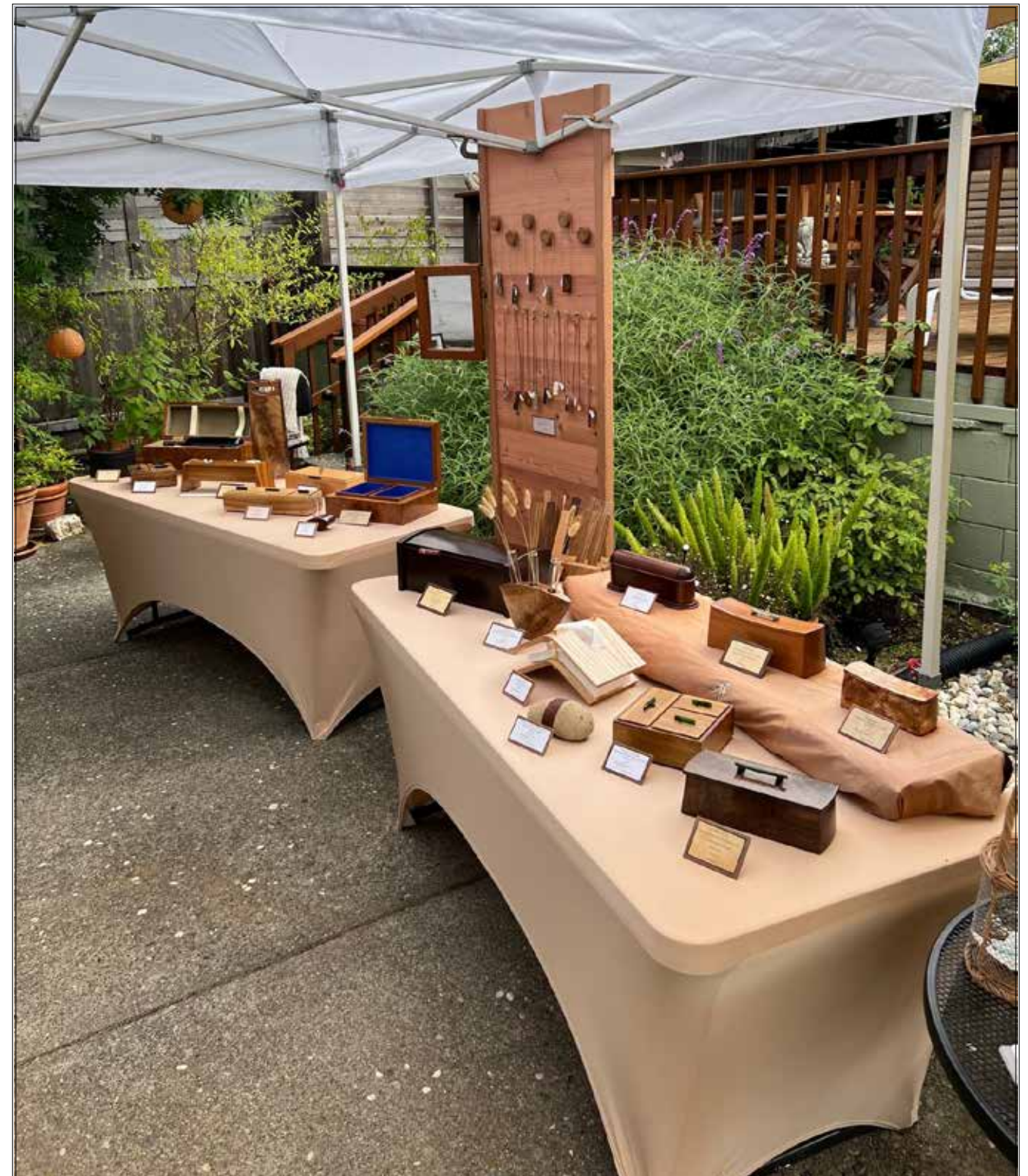




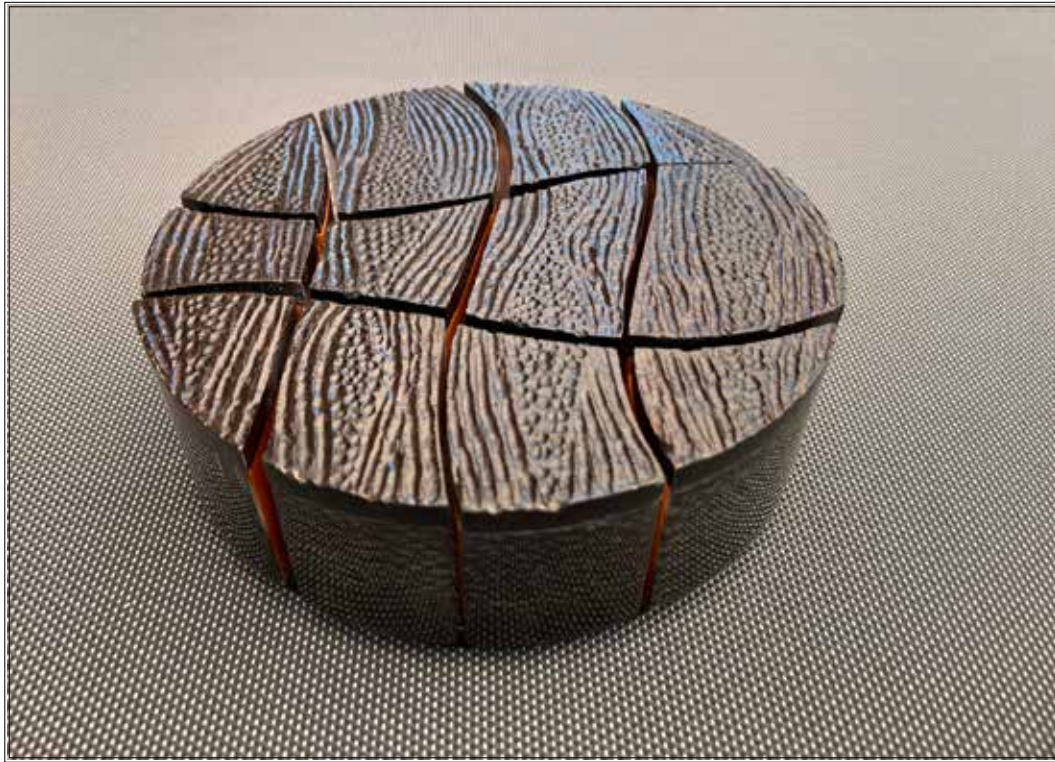
"Talking about my craft with other artists, other woodworkers, sharing techniques and explaining how things are created with the visitors is priceless, especially when you spend most of every waking hour by yourself in the shop."

Because he didn't want a lot of strangers wandering around his 600 sq. ft. shop, he set up a 10'x10' canopy in the garden, borrowed a pair of folding tables outfitted with very nice looking Spandex tablecloths, and spread out his wares for all to see. The only down side to this arrangement was that he had to take everything in at night and re-anchor the tent to keep it from blowing away.

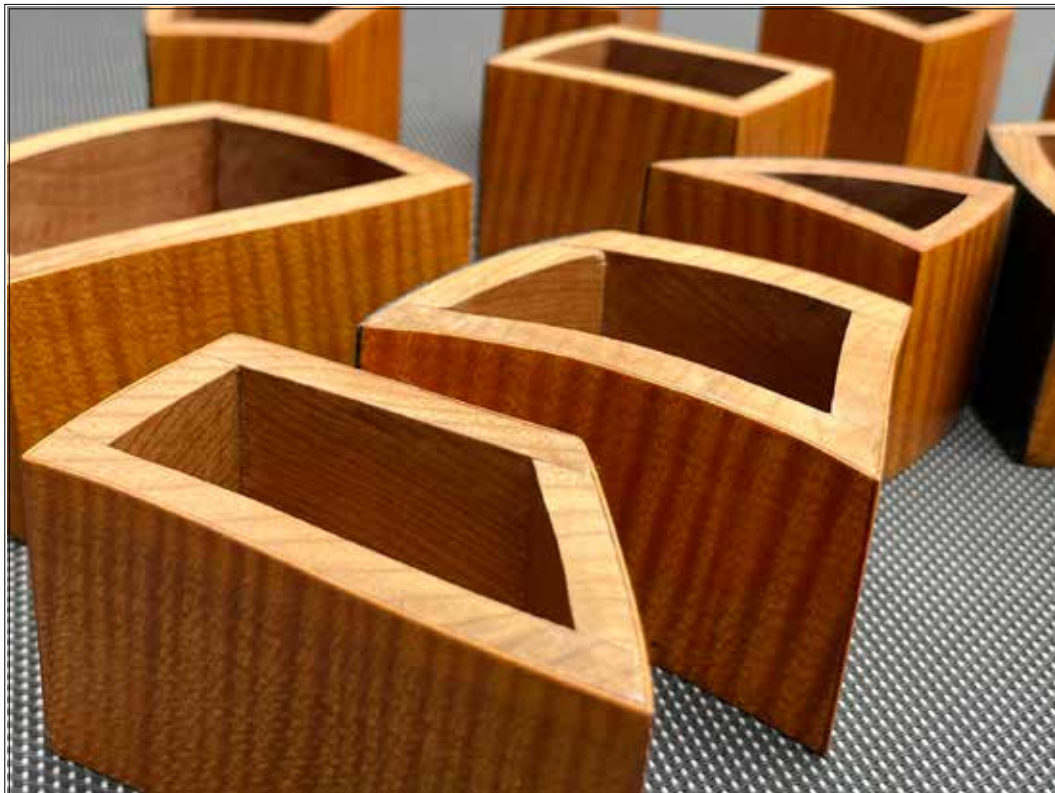
His semi precious stone pendants were displayed on a wood wall with a mirror attached to encourage trying things on. At his wife's suggestion, Kent used a "Skylight" frame to run a slide show of photos of his work in progress, geared towards showing folks how things were created.







Another SCWA member, also from Napa,  
Dominique Charmot sent us these photos of a recent project.  
This is a set of boxes meant to be assembled in a puzzle. The body of  
each box is cherry, with some dyed veneer, and wenge for the lids.





## Officers of the Association

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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 \_\_\_\_\_

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