



WOOD FORUM

Newsletter of the Sonoma County Woodworkers Association

www.sonomawoodworkers.com

Volume 33, Issue 8

August 2013

Artistry in Wood 2013

by Bill Taft

As I hope that everyone knows by now, the 2013 *Artistry in Wood Show* has been rescheduled to be held three weeks later than originally planned. This means that we all have three weeks more time to get our entries "perfect." It also means that we will *not* be holding a meeting in August, so all of the Show information will be sent to you via the Wood Forum and E-mail notices. You can also get the Show schedule information and Entry Forms on the SCWA website:

www.sonomawoodworkers.com



We Need Your Help

This is the 25th (Silver Anniversary) *Artistry in Wood Show* to be held at the Sonoma County Museum. One of the things we are doing to note this occasion, is to prepare a display about the history of the SCWA and the *Artistry in Wood Shows*. We need your help with this. If you have any information about the early years of the SCWA and the *Artistry in Wood Shows*, please share with us. Send it to Bill Taft at wgtaft@aol.com



New Show Schedule

- Wednesday, September 11th, 9 am to 4 pm - Entry Day
- Wednesday, September 18th, 7 pm - Judging and Annual Show Awards Meeting
- Saturday, September 21st, - Show Opening Day
- Tuesday, October 15th, - September SCWA Meeting at the Museum
- Sunday, October 20th, - Show Closing.
- Monday, October 21st, 9 am to 4 pm - Pick-up day for all entries

SCWA Members Triumphant in San Diego Show

Two SCWA members, Thomas Stockton and Jim Heimbach, received honors at the recently concluded 32nd annual *International Design in Wood Exhibition* held in San Diego. Stockton garnered the Master Woodworker trophy and won the 2nd Place award in the Veneer & Marquetry division for his "Iris Cabinet" pictured below.



The materials are claro walnut, ebony, koa, mother of pearl and abalone. Tom tells us, "When I designed the piece I thought I wanted irises on the front. I just wasn't quite sure of how they would look. So I built the entire piece except for veneering the door, and let it sit for a couple of months while I worked on other things and pondered what to do. I went through a lot of different ideas, and kept coming back to a bunch of pictures I had taken of irises in my driveway, thinking they would look good as marquetry/inlay. It is interesting that sometimes you have an initial design idea, but you need to explore many other options before deciding your original idea was a good one."

James Heimbach came home with First Prize in the Made for Children category for his "An Enchanted Cradle," which was featured in the February 2013 Wood Forum. The cradle also received the 2nd Place People's Choice award. Pictured on the previous page, it is constructed of figured claro walnut, lignum vitae, maple, and cherry. Techniques included steam bending and scarf joints in some curved sections. The style is reminiscent of the Viking longship, and in fact two burial ships, the Gokstad and the Oseberg, served as inspirational models for the design

Now Showing

Elizabeth Lundberg, one of the judges for the upcoming *Artistry in Wood* show, will be exhibiting her turned and sculpted work at the American Craft Council Exhibition at Fort Mason, San Francisco on August 2-3-4. The show is filled with very high quality, one-of-a-kind art and crafts from around the country. Elizabeth invites us to "come on by and say hi."

Details are available at craftcouncil.org/sf.



"J Paul Homage," by Elizabeth Lundberg.

A Summer Evening in a Sawmill

by Joe Scannell & Art Hofmann

A good sized gathering of hardy woodworkers, thirty in all, convened at Evan Shively's Arborica on Tuesday July 9, and were well rewarded for their travel efforts. Some of the members were already familiar with the sawmill and drying operation, but for this writer it was an eye-opening evening, discovering that such a large-scale lumber making operation exists practically in my backyard. "Lumber making" barely begins to describe what we saw that evening. Evan describes it as "salvaging" trees that would otherwise be condemned to the evil wood chipper or left to rot in the forest. Spread out over several acres, logs too many to count and too large to contemplate were piled high, defining the various areas of the business. The members initially gathered around the two saws, studying and salivating. The smaller one was a 48"

stationary and could be elevated to vary the cutting thickness, and the log was carried on a bed which moved on horizontal tracks 80 ft. long, giving a 37 foot net cut length. The chain was electrically driven, and the bed moved under hydraulic power. Although slow (four cuts on a large log would be a day's work), this machine works when nothing else will. Often it is used to buck logs into more manageable pieces that will then fit into the Linn mill, where they can be more efficiently sawn to final dimension.



In the fading light the group migrated to the barn, where they were overwhelmed by stack after stack of air dried lumber that sounds like a chapter out of "Identifying Wood". Sawn from logs obtained in northern California, there was of course redwood and cypress, and plentiful supplies of walnut and elm. Also in evidence were cork oak, valley oak, sycamore, bay, eucalyptus, black acacia (Australian blackwood), camphor, pine, maple and I even saw some black locust, which I have never seen anywhere outside of my back yard. There were many other species available as well, but my deteriorating memory has failed me again. Finally, against the rear wall (aka "The Wall of Anomalies") Evan has a stash of misfits too good for the fireplace, each pleading to be adopted.



wide Linn horizontal bandsaw driven by a three-phase electric motor and appeared to be propelled through the cut by a hand driven winch. If that saw did not offer enough capacity, the monster next to it would almost certainly fill the bill. This was a chain saw mill, with a 12' bar and 10' net cut width. The bar was

As dusk turned to dark, the gathering moved on to the Show Room, and a grand show it was. Walking in the door, we were immediately bedazzled by a very long slab of redwood, perhaps 6" thick and 3' wide, doing duty as a table. "Table" does not really do this piece justice - it is from the realm of kings and castles. And befitting such royalty, it is surrounded by standard bearers of nearly equal magnificence - slabs of walnut, sycamore, elm, bay, cypress, nutmeg, and many other species, each with a table or countertop lurking just under the surface





We were welcomed by the proprietor and sawyer, Evan Shively, who gave us a thumbnail sketch of the business and his entry into it, then began fielding questions posed by club members.

Arborica is the embodiment of Evan's vision of salvaging wood that would otherwise be wasted, and making it profitable. The key, he says, is to make it profitable to everyone in the supply chain. Otherwise, the chain disappears. To this end, he concentrates his efforts in northern California, rather than waste time traveling far and wide looking for that one "superb log." He has cultivated contacts among arborists, tree trimmers, and others in the log producing industry. He then buys the logs from these sources, thereby making the transaction profitable for them and guaranteeing future goodwill. In addition to making it financially profitable, he finds of equal or perhaps greater importance is a respect for the supplier's time. This may mean hiring a crane for loading, concentrating semi loads (rather than picking up just one log), and generally being ready to haul the logs away when the supplier needs them gone.

A question came up regarding curly redwood, and Evan described how, in the early days of the redwood logging industry, the California Redwood Association had a policy of sending curly redwood to the chipper. Because of the curly grain it lacked the strength of straight-grained lumber, and could not be relied upon for structural use. Should a bridge built of redwood

fail, it would reflect badly on the redwood industry as a whole, and so the curly stuff could not be sold and had to be destroyed. What actually happened is that those beautiful boards found their way into the mansions of many old lumber barons, in the form of elegant paneling and similar uses.

In the earlier days of the lumber industry, springboarding was the common practice for bringing down a tree. A platform was built around and into the base of the tree, above the enlarged buttress area of the trunk. The loggers stood on this and cut the tree down using axes and saws. Afterwards, these 10 to 15 foot high stumps were left behind in the forest. Nowadays it is profitable to go back and retrieve these short, large diameter logs, and Arborica has sawn some of these.



One member inquired whether Arborica has explored veneer production. Evan said that they have, on a limited scale, particularly sawing thick veneer. He said they use the Linn bandsaw mill for this, and have successfully sawn redwood 3/16" to 5/16" thick, 4 feet wide and twenty feet long. But, unless you are the person actually laying up the veneer (and thus profiting from that labor) there is a very little financial incentive in veneer sawing. When a log is encountered that is deemed veneer-worthy, it must be sliced up differently, which usually means no slab will be produced from the log. In addition, veneer must be handled differently to keep it flat and free of sticker stain

and similar defects. Thus, he is reluctant to commit to veneer making because it takes time and resources away from what he considers to be his primary mission, making large slabs and lumber.

Metal and other foreign objects can be encountered in sawing urban trees. Asked how Arborica detects such hazards, Evan said, "With saw blades. They work extremely well, and the more expensive, the better they work." He pointed to a slab of bay in the corner of the showroom, and told of how, when they were sawing that log, the chainsaw mill suddenly stopped dead in its tracks. To illustrate his story, he showed us a rock, kerfed by the chain, that was found em-

bedded in the crotch of the tree, surrounded by 200 years of subsequent growth. His theory: a Miwok lad had lain in wait in the crotch of that tree with his favorite deer-killing rock, then finally gave up the hunt and went home, leaving the rock forgotten. Who can argue with that?



Evan estimates the actual sawing to be only 25% of the total labor in generating a finished wood product. Also involved is log collection, unloading the trucks, and everything involved in wood care. All wood, after being sawn, is sprayed with a borate product such as Tim-bor, to prevent damage from insects. The ends of all boards and slabs are sealed with Anchor Seal, a wax emulsion that greatly slows moisture loss through the end grain, thus discouraging cracking. Then it has to be carefully stickered and stacked, and allowed to dry very slowly. Some species require extra care in this respect - they must be stacked in areas where drying will be the most prolonged, in order to avoid splitting and honeycomb. Prevention of cracks is also a matter of understanding the species, listening to the wood. Some woods simply will not dry well as 4" slabs, so you cut it the way the wood dictates.

Evan was asked about his sales strategy, and whether he encouraged walk-in customers. To this he replied no, because he does not have a sales staff, and because his salesman is, in fact, him. However, he is happy to make sales by advance appointment. A \$100 sale is as welcome as a \$10,000 one, but an appointment is the key, and will guarantee his full attention. He has four full-time employees, and has added a secretary to handle the office business, and will soon add a "barn troll" which Evan describes as a librarian who is very good with a forklift. This person will be responsible for cataloging and monitoring all the lumber being produced, creating an organized

inventory. When asked how, under the current system, he is able to find a specific wood product, Evan described himself as "the squirrel who knows where all the nuts are." The barn troll will hopefully relieve Evan of some of this responsibility and provide him with more time in the yard, so that he can be more involved in the actual sawing. This is the part he finds most enjoyable - being there when a spectacular log is opened, deciding how the log should be cut.

When he was asked how the state of the economy has impacted his business, he acknowledged that he has not been immune to its effects. However, he has been busily improving the machinery and building up his inventory, which by the nature of wood is a slow, protracted process. The work is far from over, but he feels now that the fulfillment of the vision he had for Arborica is at hand. The meeting ended with a big hand of applause for Evan Shively. The evening was definitely worth the trip.



Officers of the Association

<u>Chairman</u>	Bob Moyer	762-3713	<u>Secretary</u>	Steve Thomas	568-7062
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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 joejakey@comcast.net or at SCWAMESSAGES@gmail.com. Advertisements are also accepted with a per-entry cost of \$5 per column inch.

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.

[] I am enclosing an additional \$15 to receive the Forum by regular mail.

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____

City, Zip _____ Home Phone _____

Cell Phone _____ Work Phone _____

Please send check and completed application to:

Sonoma County Woodworkers Association, PO Box 4176, Santa Rosa, CA 95402