



WOOD FORUM

Newsletter of the Sonoma County Woodworkers Association

www.sonomawoodworkers.com

Volume 33 Number 1

January 2013

December Meeting Holiday Potluck Social



Inside:

January Meeting Notice
Calendar
Holiday Potluck
Chairman's Notes
SCWA Business
What to Do with Leftover Chips
Black Woods
Saw Painting?

January Meeting Notice

By Art Hoffman

Where: Rancho Cotati Cottages
8050 Starr Court
Cotati, CA

When: Tuesday, Jan. 8th, 7:00 PM

Who: Nick Christiansen, Urban
Hardwoods

Our first meeting of the year will take place at Cotati Cottages on Tuesday January 8th 2013 at 7 PM. The speaker will be Nick Christiansen of Urban Hardwoods in San Francisco. The company is dedicated to salvaging wood from trees that are removed in urban settings, cutting the trunks into slabs and then making very serviceable and attractive furniture from them. The company has branches in three locations: Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles. Nick will tell us about ins and outs of the business, its history and how it manages to negotiate the current economic climate. Urban Hardwoods website can be found at <http://www.urbanhardwoods.com/>

Directions: Cotati Cottages is located west of the Hwy 101 and Hwy 116 interchange. Take Highway 101 to the Gravenstein Highway (116 West) exit. Head west towards Sebastopol about ¼ mile to Alder Avenue. Turn right on Alder and then turn right on the first street which is Ford Lane (Cotati Cottages sign). Proceed to the end of Ford Lane and park in the gravel parking spaces. The Clubhouse is the small building on the northeast corner of Ford Lane and Starr Court. There is limited parking near the clubhouse. If the gravel parking area is full, please park on the east side of Alder Avenue.

Calendar

By Art Hoffman

February 5: John Philips, world-class harpsichord builder; Place TBD

March 5: Roger Heitzman, art deco furniture maker and sculptor; Place TBD

April 2: Elizabeth Lundgren, turner extraordinaire; Place TBD

Holiday Potluck

By Mike Burwen

This article can be summed up as “everyone had a great time.” Thanks again to Don Ajello and Linda Illsey for hosting the event for the third year in a row. Don also roasted and carved the turkeys – apt duty for a sculptor! Not even the rain put a damper on the party.

SCWA members and their significant others brought some eclectic dishes to share. Larry Stroud’s hachiya persimmon delights were spectacular. He told me that they had to be hand-massaged like Kobe beef! Mike and Sherry Burwen brought a traditional Chanukah pasta dish called Kasha Varnishkas. Bill and Anne Taft brought some dessert treats derived from ancestral recipes that were nothing short of outrageously decadent. I could fill several paragraphs extolling the virtues of the food, but you get the idea.

If you didn’t make it to the Party this year, make sure you put it on your calendar for next year. Trust me, you’ll be glad you did.

Chairman’s Notes

By Michael Wallace

It appears the end of world will have to wait, as I’m writing past the “due date” of the apocalypse. Whew, means my wood stash is safe for awhile.

Here we are at the end of the year and beginning of the new. We will see some officers retire (thanks Bill Hartman and Dennis Lashar) and a new one installed (Steve Thomas).

A short time ago, it appeared that we would not have anyone fill the position of Chairperson. It now appears that we might have TWO people contending for that position, including me! Ultimately, it is you, the Members, who will decide who will lead the SCWA in 2013.

I want to thank all the Members who pitched in and helped with our various functions. Without their commitment, our meetings, the *Artistry in Wood* show and all of our other services would not have happened.

Finally, as you’ll be reading this after Dec. 25, I want to wish you all a Happy and Prosperous New Year. As John Lennon said so many years ago: “..a happy New Year, let’s hope it’s a good one without any fear.” Amen!

SCWA Business

By Mike Burwen

Chairman Michael Wallace appointed Scott Clark as Assistant to Show Chairman Bill Taft. Bill plans to train Scott so that he can take over in 2014. I hope everyone will join me in welcoming Scott before he finds out how much work is involved!

As Michael Wallace stated in his article, it now appears that we will have a contested election for Chairperson. That election will be held at a brief special meeting to be held before the regular meeting on January 8. Keep your eyes open for an email that will describe how the election will proceed and the candidate's goals for 2013.

Choosing a Chairperson is obviously important to the Association. I hope everyone who can make it will be at the January 8 meeting.

What To Do With Your Leftover Wood Chips

By Mike Burwen

All of us at one time or another has wondered what we can do with all those leftover wood chips besides burning or tossing them. One man has found the perfect solution as you can see from the following pictures.



The artist, Sergey Bobkov, 55, from Krasnoyarsk, Russia, has obtained a patent on his technique for making these

fantastic sculptures. To prevent crumbling, he steeps wood chips of Siberian Red Cedar, Cembra Pine, Willow and Beech in water for several days. This makes the chips pliable enough so that he can roll them to form feathers or fur.



Each piece takes Sergey roughly six months to complete, working 14 hours a day. He has been offered upwards of 500,000 rubles for a piece (\$17,000), but refuses to sell them. I was unable to find out what he lives on!

If you Google his name, you will find several references and many more pictures of Sergey's unique pieces.

Baulines Craft Guild Exhibition

By Mike Burwen

The Baulines Craft Guild is holding an Exhibition featuring some fabulous examples (see below) of fine woodworking from noted artists including several of our members. The show ends December 30, so it may be too late for you to attend by the time you read this, but it is a great show. It is being held at the Popup Gallery next to Crate & Barrel in the Town Centre mall in Corte Madera. See www.baulinescraftguild.org for more info and hours.





Cherry Sculptured Cabinet at Baulines

to India but grown as a plantation timber all over the tropical world.

There are many other woods that have “blackwood” in their common names, such as Australian Blackwood (*Acacia melanoxylon*), but are more brown than black.

The “true” ebonies from the *Diospyrus* genus (which contains over 700 species (including persimmons) are hard and very heavy. They are difficult to work, but take a fantastic polish and have been sculptor favorites for millennia.



Macassar Ebony Guitar

Black Woods

By Mike Burwen

I suspect that most of us have made something out of black wood at one time or another. I wonder how many of us who have done that knew what species of wood was being used. There are several wood species that are black or nearly so that find their way into the timber trade. The most well-known are:

- **Ceylon Ebony**, *Diospyrus ebenum*, native to Southern India and Sri Lanka.
- **Gaboon Ebony**, *Diospyrus crassiflora*, native to Western Africa. Considered as the “true ebony.”
- **Macassar Ebony**, *Diospyrus celebica*, native to Sulawesi, Indonesia
- **Mauritius Ebony**, *Diospyrus tessellaria*, native to the island of Mauritius
- **Madagascar Ebony**, *Diospyrus gracilipes*, now illegal to harvest.
- **Malaysian Blackwood**, *Diospyrus ebonaceae*, native to Malaysian jungles.
- **Wenge**, *Millettia laurentii*, native to central Africa.
- **African Blackwood** or **Grenadilla**, *Dalbergia melanoxylon*, native to south and east Africa.
- **Bombay Blackwood**, *Dalbergia latifolia*, also known as **East Indian Rosewood** (See 12/12 Forum), native

Many of the black wood species are popular in the making of musical instruments. Ceylon Ebony and African Blackwood are used extensively in high-end wind instruments such as clarinets, oboes and bagpipes. Macassar ebony is a favorite of guitar makers. Gaboon Ebony is the species that most people identify with the word “ebony”, but it has been logged out in Gaboon (and many other West African countries) and almost all of the commercially available West African ebony today comes from the country of Cameroon.



Ebony Floor

There is an excellent video by Bob Taylor of Taylor Guitars on the subject of ebony at www.youtube.com/watch?v=anCGvfsBoFY. He says that Taylor Guitars through a subsidiary has a license to harvest 75% of Cameroon’s legally harvestable ebony trees. He says only 10% of ebony trees contain pure black wood.

The other 90% have gray streaks, and, by using that wood, the ebony supply is 10 times larger than it would be if only solid black wood trees were acceptable. He claims to have convinced other guitar makers and ebony users to accept “streaky” wood.



Ebony Elephant Carving

Most every woodworker is familiar with Wenge. It comes from a huge tree (typically 4’ diameter, 100’ high) that can yield a large amount of timber. Once relatively common, because of loss of habitat and over-exploitation, it is becoming increasingly expensive. Because it is not only heavy and hard, but also available in large dimensions, the wood has practically unlimited usage from flooring to furniture to pin blocks on hammered dulcimers!



Wenge

A few SCWA members have asked me where I get the material for these *Forum* articles on wood. The answer is online research. I encourage anyone who wants to go deeper than these short articles permit to do the same. The amount of information available online for many wood species is astounding. I recommend you start by Googling the Latin names of the various species. Happy hunting.



Ebony Bagpipe Reeds

Saw Painting?

By Mike Burwen

You probably thought wood saws were designed to cut wood. Not so, says artist Rico Solinas of San Francisco, who paints art museums on the blades of handsaws. You can see examples at Gallery Paule Anglim, 14 Geary Blvd., San Francisco, Jan. 4 – Feb. 2.



About the SCWA

Founded 33 years ago, the **Sonoma County Woodworkers Association**, is dedicated to the art and craft of fine woodworking. Its more than 100 professional and amateur members share ideas, experiences and techniques. At monthly meetings, well-known woodworkers discuss their craft and demonstrate their methodologies. Each year, the SCWA sponsors the *Artistry in Wood* exhibition at the Sonoma County Museum featuring members' work. Annual dues are \$35.

Wood Forum is the monthly newsletter of the SCWA. Members are invited to submit notices, articles and comments for inclusion. Submit entries to:

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Officers of the Association

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