

# Wood Forum

Welcome to the new format for the Wood Forum. I am test-driving this new format with an eye to making it permanent. It is based on the iPad landscape format and makes better use of virtually all computer screens, which are horizontal. As you will see, there is more room for pictures, and page layout is more flexible. It can still be printed in the usual manner, but you will have to turn the paper sideways to read it. Sorry.

To navigate this new format on a PC, there are a few shortcut keys that are helpful.

The first is **Control L**, which puts you in full screen mode. I encourage you to try this. The whole document will be bigger and easier to read, without the need to scroll up and down each page.

From full screen, the **Up** and **Down** arrow keys will advance you through the pages as you might expect. Or if you prefer, a left mouse click is the same as Down arrow, and Shift left click is the same as Up arrow. **Control P** opens the print dialog box. **ESC** will exit full screen mode.

If you are using an iPad, you're on your own. Just kidding. If you have an iPad, you already know how to use this format.

I welcome your comments and criticisms. Help me get this right.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe Scammell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline for the letter "J".



# WOOD FORUM

Newsletter of the Sonoma County Woodworkers Association

Volume 33, Issue 10

October 2013

## Artistry in Wood 2013

The 25th Annual *Artistry in Wood* Show opened Saturday, September 21st and runs through Sunday, October 20th at the Sonoma County Museum. The museum is open from 11 am to 5 pm, Tuesday through Sunday. The Sonoma County Museum is located at 425 Seventh Street, Santa Rosa. The phone number is (707) 579-1500.

### A Message from Bill Taft:

Working on the Show is an enjoyable and rewarding experience for me. All of the comments that we have received on the show have been very complimentary. Everyone likes it. Most of the credit for this is due to the outstanding work that has been entered. I congratulate all of you that entered your work in this year's Show.

The Show would not be what it is without the help of the volunteers and the museum staff. A special thanks to Scott Clark who has helped for the whole period of preparation. This year's volunteer crew, Dennis Lashar, Bob Moyer, Paul Rothhaus, Joe Scannell, Brian Fraser Smith, Walt Doll and Kalia Kilban did a great job of preparing the exhibit space and were a big help with setting up the show. And thank you Eric Stanley for all of your help with setting up the exhibit.

*Continued on page 2*

## Best of Show



## Important Upcoming Dates

**October 8th** - regular monthly meeting, held at David Marks' studio, 2128 Marsh Road Santa Rosa. Special guest presentation by Paul Schürch, marquetry expert and teacher. For details, see page 8.

**October 15th**, 7 pm - The second SCWA meeting in October will be held in the *Artistry in Wood* exhibit hall. This meeting is the best opportunity for members to see the Show and hear about the entries. Award certificates will be presented at this meeting and Show participants will discuss their entries. The meeting will be an open forum where you may ask questions of the members during their presentations. All members with work in this year's Show are encouraged to attend and talk about their entered work. Bill Taft will serve as moderator.

**October 20th** - Sunday, final day of 2013 *Artistry in Wood* Show. Show closes at 5 pm.

**October 21st** - Pick-up day for all entries is Monday, between 9 am and 4 pm. Please contact Bill Taft, at [wghtaft@aol.com](mailto:wghtaft@aol.com) or 707-794-8025, if you are not able to retrieve your entry on this day.

*Seven String 'Monterey' Arch Top Guitar, by Tom Ribbecke*

*Photo by Tyler Chartier*



A Message from Bill Taft, *continued from page 1*

Tyler Chartier has photographed all of the entries in this year's Show, and many of his photos are in this issue of the newsletter. Some of his photos appeared in an article about the *Artistry in Wood* Show in the Press Democrat and some will appear in publications reporting on the Show. Thanks Tyler for doing this for us this year.



*Tyler Chartier & Larry Stroud*

I also want to thank Larry Stroud for helping with the photography and for making the video presentation showing the award winning entries from previous Shows. Take a look at this video when you visit the Show; I think that you'll enjoy it. Because this is the 25th anniversary of the Show being held at the Sonoma County Museum, we prepared an exhibit on the history of the SCWA and the Artistry in Wood Show.

Thank you Art Hofmann, John Keller, Ralph Carlson, David Marks, Philip Nereo and Eric Stanley for your help with this.

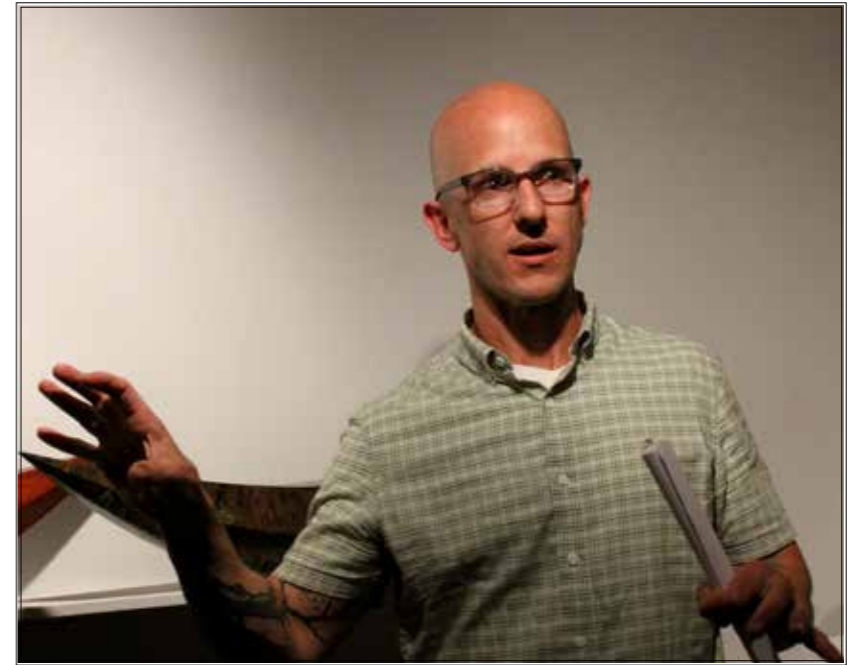
Thanks also to the guild members that served on the jury for this year's Show. A special thanks to Jeff Shallenberger, Elizabeth Lundburg and Pat Kirkish for judging the Show and for sharing your comments on the entries with us.



*Pat Kirkish*

*Elizabeth Lundburg*

*All photos this page by Jose Cuervo*



*Jefferson Shallenberger*





# Judgment Day

## September meeting held at Sonoma County Museum *Artistry in Wood Show*

by Art Hofmann

The meeting began somewhat late, with the judges, guests and members milling around the larger first floor rooms of the Sonoma County Museum. Chairman Bob Moyer opened the meeting by setting things in perspective, namely, that this meeting represents the 25th annual *Artistry in Wood* show at the Sonoma County Museum. Bob then introduced John Keller, who founded the organization in 1977, which subsequently had its first show in 1978 at the Hand Goods shop in Occidental. The first show at the Museum was in 1988.

The sole business item was the announcement of the formation of a nominating committee for the election of next year's officers. This led to a plea on Bob's part for members to consider volunteering. We do indeed hold elections, but basically, this is a volunteer organization, which runs on the energies of a handful of members, many of whom are ready to relinquish the jobs they have held for some years.

Art Hofmann announced the next several meetings: October 8th with Paul Schürch, the marquetry expert as a presenter; October 15th at the Museum again, to hear the makers expound on the work in the current Show; November, a Guild meeting focused on skills; and the holiday party, which our host Don Ajello told us would take place on the first weekend of December.

Before handing the meeting over to our Show Chair, Bill Taft, our chairman, Bob Moyer alluded to a history of the organization that is in the works. With that, Bill Taft thanked the Museum for housing the Show; his assistant, Scott Clark, who will chair next year's Show; the volunteers who got the display space ready

by painting it; and Larry Stroud and Tyler Chartier for photographing the pieces. The Show will open on Saturday, September 21 to the public, with a reception on Saturday, September 28th at 6 pm. Bill then introduced the judges, who had worked throughout the afternoon examining entries and making award selections. Judges were Pat Kirkish, a co-owner of Dovetail Collection gallery in Healdsburg, who has been in business with her husband since 2003, showing fine furniture and other crafts; Elizabeth Lundburg, a turner of intricately carved vessels from Benicia, known to many of us from her presentation earlier this year; and Jeff Shallenberger, a College of the Redwoods graduate and a maker of fine furniture from Santa Cruz. With that, the entire group moved to the overly warm close quarters of the upstairs exhibition space.



*Fantasium* by Michael Masumoto & Kai Herd

Pat Kirkish began by telling us that the judges found something to admire in each piece, though some had that little bit extra that put them over the top. With that in mind, they focused on the award-winning pieces. Jeff Shallenberger was called on to talk about the huge eye catching 'mantel place' piece, *Fantasium* by Kai Herd and Michael Masumoto. Shallenberger said that there was a lot to like about this piece, which garnered

it an Award of Excellence. He appreciated the technical skill involved, and that it was the woodwork that attracted him, with its intricate bent laminations that formed an arching tree. Jeff found the lights distracting, preferring the piece without them. A yellowish, amber tone was suggested. The makers assured him that the lights could be dimmed and altered in color. Kirkish said the judges all admired the wood selection, particularly on the top. "So much to appreciate." (Jeff humorously wanted the piece to play music).

Next was a piece by Carol Salvin entitled *What Lies Beneath*, in the studio furniture mode where the judges had more questions than answers. Lundburg said that she loved it for its creativeness, whimsy, humor, imagination. Judges were intrigued by the piece but perplexed by the stack laminations and other elements which they found distracting. (They seemed unaware that the front piece flipped out to reveal a hidden compartment). The judges then moved on to *Tables and Stools*, a dark, rather tall round table and two stools, by T.S. Stockton, most of which they found very pleasing, except for the stainless steel rails on the stools, where they would have preferred something black. The piece was deemed technically so fine, especially the veneered top, that it was distinguished with an Award of Excellence.

Lundburg then drew our attention to the bank of turnings in the front room: all had good elements; however, generally, many of the turnings in the show left something to be desired. Not a fan of shiny finishes, she advised sanding up to 1200 grit, making the work shine as if it were finished before applying the "finish," striving for a "glow in the wood that is not from the finish." She made general comments on the pieces, finding one very nicely balanced, another as having a flat spot, and made a complaint about the lack of thinness in a certain bowl. She liked the *Spalted Vessel* by Steven Forrest, but found another piece in this display a bit too thick, and yet another marred by a distracting wobble. "God is in the details" is her credo. If one little element detracts, the piece doesn't work overall.

Kirkish praised Joe Scannell's four little stools carved with names as being charming in that they almost showed the history of a family, one stool for each child, each in a slightly different style, possibly indicating the growth of the maker as an artisan as well. These were examples of furniture in an American vernacular tradition. In *Jake's Bench*, a large footstool like-seat with an upholstered cushion embroidered with a devil figure by Les Ciszek, the judges found workmanship that was tight and flawless, with one off-putting design element: the posts, which were sharp and a detriment to sitting. The judges liked John Cobb's *Natural Edge Bowl*. Lundburg liked the orientation of the sides with the grain, and the symmetry, but found fault with the finish and an overlooked pencil mark; still, it was so solid a work that it was found worthy of an Award of Excellence.

Shallenberger spoke to Joshua Smith's *Icarus Dresser* in madrone, which he admired for the amount of work it entailed and its overall design, finding only the slightest points to cavil: the size of the door handles a bit too large perhaps for such a refined, feminine-feeling piece, and a drawer that did not move quite perfectly. Indeed, he found so little to object to that it received an Award of Excellence. (Smith is a second year student at COR's Fine Woodworking Program in Ft. Bragg).



*Icarus Dresser* by Joshua Smith

Photo by Tyler Chartier

Two small chairs (gossip chairs) by Joe Amaral were addressed next which also received Awards of Excellence. Shallenberger was particularly in their thrall, despite generally not liking this kind of thing. One chair features a back with a remarkable blue emu eggshell and Japanese urushi lacquer, the seat of deep blue-green sting ray shagreen. The other chair has a seat covered with ostrich egg and urushi lacquer, and a marquetry back



*Gossip Chair* by Joe Amaral

Photo by Tyler Chartier

of yellow wood, "a sexy thatched roof." Some of these materials and techniques were unfamiliar to the judges, who could only praise the effects. Joe is a professional wood finisher who works in Ft. Bragg, and these exquisitely finished chairs are a *tour de force*.



*Oak Bowl* by Dennis Lashar

Photo by Tyler Chartier

Bill Taft's *Flower Trio*, a series of three marquetry pictures in walnut and other hardwoods was praised by Kirkish, who found the center panel particularly subtle. Slight variations in shade create a flowering effect.

*Oak Bowl* by Dennis Lashar received an Award of Excellence and earned the respect of Lundburg, who loved its grain, the natural deformity, and symmetry. The exact species was indeterminate, someone having thrown the chunk into Dennis' driveway, an occurrence familiar to turners: *Quercus freewoodis*.

The seat on Michael Murphy's *Sculpted Barstool* had sharp edges that the judges felt needed an ergonomic adjustment. Murphy's *Bar Table* was deemed attractive and well executed, so much so that it received an Award of Excellence.

Judges found fault with Bill Taft's *Floor Lamp* in sapele: the exquisite top seemed inadequately supported by the base, which could have been larger. Joe Scannell's *Joe Crow's Book Nook* found delight with the judges. Kirkish in particular was a fan, and said she wanted one in her house. They found fault with a joint that wasn't tight, which then turned out to be in reality...a drawer. After instantaneous review of this new fact with the other judges, the piece received an Award of



Excellence, much to the approval of the members, who signaled their approval of this generous act with laughter and spontaneous applause.

Kirkish said that the judges were puzzled about Carol Salvin's *Wizard*. Salvin explained that it related to Chinese medicine where it is the wizard's role to make a symbolic fusion of the five fundamental but dissimilar elements of this tradition. Notes for the judges to this effect would have helped guide their process. Kerry Marshall's *Sound+Beauty=Music* stand, made of recycled wine barrel staves and emblazoned with the eponymous Chinese characters, received an Award of Excellence, but was felt to be in the wrong category, not art, but furniture.



*Green Pecker 2013* by Don Ajello Photo by Tyler Chartier

Don Ajello's *Green Pecker - 2013*, another one of the Petaluma Pecker series, made the judges smile and it was duly distinguished with the **Best Art Piece** award.

Moving through the turn to the next room, Lundburg reviewed the turned objects on the large display stand that greets viewers on entry to this section, and here again, despite citing many of the objects as being very close to success, she felt that too many of these pieces were not finished properly - too much shine and not enough work done to bring out the true nature of the wood. She did however select three pieces for awards.

*Sparky* by Les Ciszek, a redwood burl vessel she described as "perfectly balanced" was given the **Best Turning Award** – the judges found it "spectacular."



*Sparky* by Les Ciszek

Photo by Tyler Chartier

Alan Brickman's *Tilted Ring Bowl* received an Award of Excellence, as did John Cobb's *Hollow Form - Unknown Wood*. Schallenberger was very pleased with David Marks' crescent moon shaped sculptural pieces, and was utterly surprised by them to the degree that they together received an Award of Excellence.

Brian Fraser Smith's *Console Table* was praised for its utter functionality, but nothing else in the judges' view seemed to distinguish it. The top, a massive piece of ancient growth redwood is lovely to look at. *My Muse* by Robert Plutchok, a dancing ribbon in



*Tilted Ring Bowl* by Alan Brickman

Photo by Tyler Chartier

various woods, was praised for its intent, but otherwise perplexed the judges, who wanted better execution, and less sanding in this instance to bring out the facets of the different woods.

All three judges chimed in on praising Scott Clark's *Basket of Leaves*. Lundburg wanted more branding on the leaves, more definition, but basically, they really liked it, and it too received an Award of Excellence.

Concerning *Make it a Double* by Michael Murphy, Shallenberger said that he is basically not a Maloof fan, and even wondered if this was an exact replica of Sam's work. Yet he admired the workmanship and liked the ride so much, that he wanted to have it all to himself. Thus excellent technique and execution plus undeniable beauty resulted in another Award of Excellence. Kirkish chimed in as well in terms of skillful wood selection on the seat.



*Basket of Leaves* by Scott Clark  
Photo by Tyler Chartier

Shallenberger and Kirkish found Larry Stroud's *Shoe Bench* excellent and it was awarded **Best Furniture Piece**. They liked the design – Zen, but not over the top – and fulsomely praised the carved panels in the sliding doors in terms of color and pattern, and finally, the friendly functionality of the handle/arm rests on each side.



*Shoe Bench* by Larry Stroud

Photo by Tyler Chartier

Jim Schmidt's cradle, entitled *Maia's Birthday Present* found favor with all three judges, particularly Kirkish who saw in it everything that fine furniture should be: precious, joyful, sweet, loving, even inheritable, and therefore worthy of an Award of Excellence.

*Norm and Patti*, by Vince Van Dyke was admired for its technical achievement, but questioned in some of its design choices, like the gratuitous use of a butterfly joint in the middle of the top, turning it into a purely decorative element, and its tip-toe feet that seemed almost added on as stilts. Still, they admired the amount of work and its overall accomplishment. Lundburg loved Ralph Carlson's *Wall Cabinet*, since it celebrates so strongly a lovely piece of wood that Ralph found in an outdoor scrap pile at Calico Hardwoods. She liked

the design and the added hardware as well, though Kirkish found fault with the interior, where she did not like the slim window glass shelves, feeling they should be thicker. *Wall Cabinet* received an Award of Excellence.

Joshua Smith's attentively quiet *Window Table* with its top of Swedish ash found favor with all the judges, as being simple, straightforward, perfect in its execution and wood selection. Beautiful details, plus a sweet smelling Port Orford cedar drawer. Another Award of Excellence.

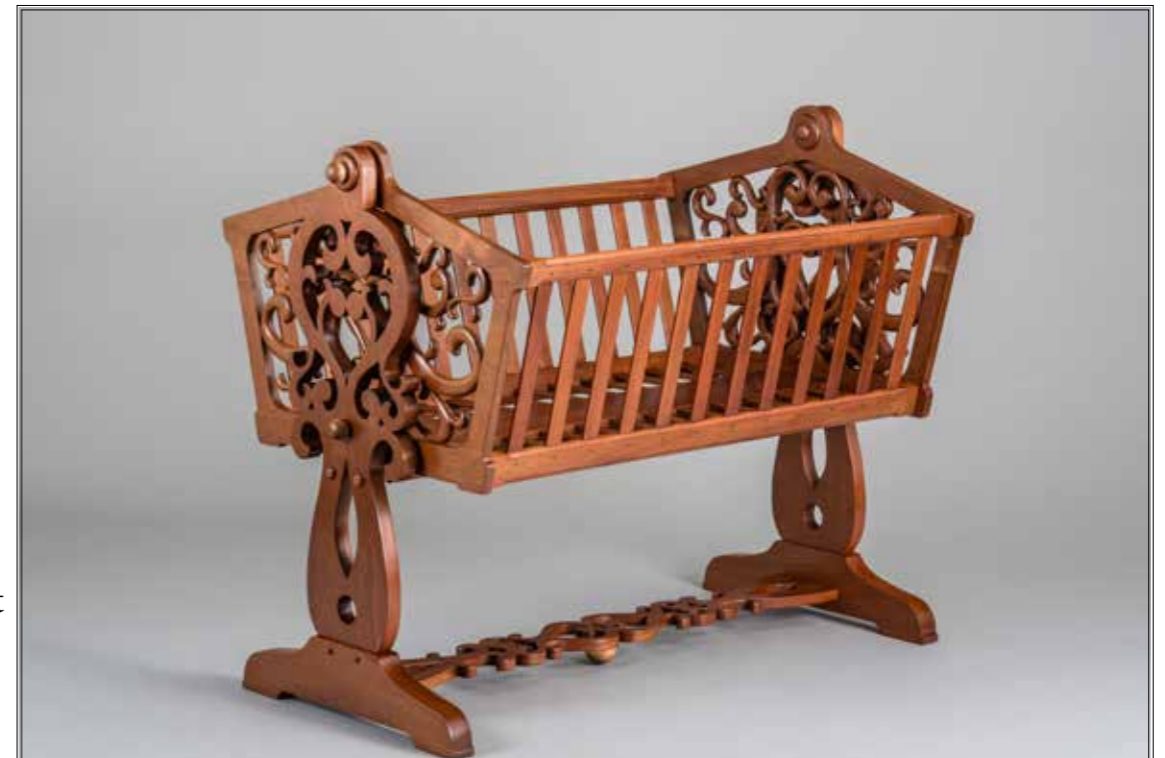
And yet another Award of Excellence went to Tom Stockton's *Iris Cabinet* with its flower inlays in abalone shell. There were slight imperfections noted in the inlay, and the lesser woods and workmanship in the interior.

A beautiful *Walnut Bowl* by Dennis Lashar, which received another Award of Excellence, was so close to perfection that it vied with *Sparky* for Best Turning. "Wonderful work, keep it up," was Lundburg's recommendation.

John Moldavan's *Contemporary Rocker* won an Award of Excellence, despite Shallenberger's reservations concerning its adjustability and aspects of its finish. John said it was a prototype which he made as an experiment, and that it had gotten good feedback in some shows. He made it in response to the need to accommodate different sized people's need to find a personal sweet spot in the runner. Rockers, it seems, are very personal things,

they either work for an individual or do not. Some people want a short fast rock, others a long luxurious one. Lundburg liked this chair because it worked for her, and Kirkish chimed in too, saying that it received an award because it was the start of something that had potential.

Concerning David Marks' large gilt disk, entitled *Gold Fusion*, Kirkish said that it seemed almost too monochromatic, and that she wanted more variance in the surface texture. A small red spot in the lower left quadrant appealed to her. Marks said that in talking to an artist, he was told to always include red, because it was the color of blood, to which Kirkish responded that she wanted to see "more blood."



*Maia's Birthday Present* by Jim Schmidt

Photo by Tyler Chartier

Lundburg found John Moldavan's second entry, *Claro Rocker*, to her liking: it fit her just fine. She praised the use of the wood. Kirkish wanted more shape on the arms at the point where the arms go. The piece was given an Award of Excellence.

*Thanks, George*, a glass-top table by Vince Van Dyke, with a nod to George Nakashima because of the 'big



chunk' of the main support, was discussed by Shallenberger. The glass did not seem right, however. The legs did not seem to be refined enough, lacking an arc perhaps, for Lundburg's taste.

A delightful array of *Whittled Spoons*, the result of handwork by Victor Larson, received **Best Miscellany** piece, the only piece in this category. Kirkish described the entry as "Utterly inviting, making the viewer want to pick them up and begin scooping something." Lundburg enjoyed Robert Plutchok's *Turtle*, which she praised as a very successful piece with lots of spirit, though she longed for more detail to draw her eye.



*Universe Fingerboard* by Larry Robinson

Photo by Tyler Chartier



*Whittled Spoons* by Victor Larson

Photo by Tyler Chartier

Finally, turning to the guitars by Tom Ribbecke and Larry Robinson, Kirkish said that these were world class instruments, by makers who are world famous, and that the three items, the two guitars and the heavily inlaid fingerboard, all represent the pinnacle of the concept of artistry in wood. They found it exceedingly hard to say which was the most successful, but in the end the Tom Ribbecke's *Seven String 'Monterey' Arch Top Guitar* took **Best of Show**, while Larry Robinson's *China Guitar* and *Universe Fingerboard* were each designated Award of Excellence winners.



*China Guitar* by Larry Robinson

Photo by Tyler Chartier

Tom said that he made the guitar for a private client, an arrangement that goes beyond his two existing guitar producing shops. The woods here are Big Leaf Maple, Koa and Ebony. A Japanese artist he met said that the reason the Japanese liked Tom's work was that it represented wabi-sabi, an expression that means elegance and simplicity. Larry Robinson told us that he is a luthier, but specializes in embellishing guitars with inlay and painting. The idea for the *China Guitar* came to him in a dream: the painting was done by Lampo Leong, a Chinese landscape artist, using various inks on the raw wood. The embellished *Universe Fingerboard* was the work of eleven years.

After some more talk by the guitar makers and a few questions, Bill Taft wrapped up the evening by congratulating the award winners and thanking the judges for their diligent work. Members applauded vigorously and then dispersed into smaller groups to discuss the evening's proceedings.



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# October Members Meeting

Featuring Marquetry Master Paul Schürch

The regular monthly meeting of the Sonoma County Woodworkers Association will be held at David Marks' studio on Tuesday, October 8th 2013 at 7 pm.

The meeting will feature Paul Schürch, a grand master in the art of marquetry, who has been

involved in wood-working since the 70's. Paul apprenticed and learned primarily in Switzerland, but also made educational forays into Italy, England, and other countries. He started as a piano and church organ builder at the age of 15, studied marquetry and the making of mosaics in Italy, boat building in England, and Japanese woodworking techniques in New Hampshire. He has lived and worked in the Santa Barbara area since the 1980s, where he makes furniture, teaches courses, and markets his materials and books. He is a much sought after lecturer with an extensive website at:



<http://www.schurchwoodwork.com/index.html>

Remember, BYOC: David Marks' shop has very few chairs. If you expect to sit down and be comfortable it is imperative that you bring your own chair.

David Marks' studio is located at 2128 Marsh Road, Santa Rosa, CA 95403.

## November Elections Ominously Near

As November 5th looms just over the calendar page, the seemingly perennial problem of leadership and volunteering are resurfacing. Last year the SCWA found itself without, among other things, a Chairperson. After several months of difficult navigation, Bob Moyer kindly volunteered to stand in, *for 1 year*. That year is now up. We are soon also to be without a Secretary, as Steve Thomas is leaving. Jim Heimbach is vacating the position of Treasurer, and Bob Moyer has again generously stepped up to fill the void, *for one year*. Art Hofmann has officially tendered his resignation as Program Secretary, an appointed position in which he has provided us with his thorough write-ups of the monthly meetings. As well, he has given notice that next year will be his last as Program Chairperson.

Bill Taft is also handing over the reins, after a magnificent job as Show Chair. He has already groomed his replacement, Scott Clark, who worked on the last Show side-by-side with Bill. Larry Stroud will remain as Guild Chairperson, and Joe Scannell will continue as Wood Forum Editor.

So there are many shoes to be filled. We are seeking nominations for Chairperson and Secretary. We need a writer to take up the task of writing the monthly meeting notes. This is a volunteer organization, and we should all be asking what we can personally do to make it better. Many hands make light work. It is easy to say we are too busy to take on another task, but the aphorism, "If you want the job done, give it to a busy person" is still as true today as it ever was.



## Officers of the Association

<u>Chairman</u>	Bob Moyer	762-3713	<u>Secretary</u>	Steve Thomas	568-7062
<u>Program Chair</u>	Art Hofmann	542-9767	<u>Guild Chair</u>	Larry Stroud	823-1775
<u>Treasurer</u>	James Heimbach	355-9013	<u>Show Chair</u>	Bill Taft	794-8025
<u>Editor</u>	Joe Scannell	(415) 892-9104			

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](mailto:joejakey@comcast.net) or at [SCWAMESSAGES@gmail.com](mailto: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