



# WOOD FORUM

Newsletter of the Sonoma County Woodworkers Association

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## A Meeting of the Minds

The first-ever virtual meeting of the SCWA went off without a hitch, and had 42 attendees, which must be some kind of a record. It was a welcome work-around for the many members who have been hunkered down, trying to stay healthy and yet get together with friends.

The meeting began as usual with the acting Chair, Don Jereb synopsisizing the September 2 Board meeting, the minutes of which appeared in the November *Wood Forum*. The Association is on a sound financial footing, and because there have been very few expenses (due to the COVID shutdown) the Board has decided to extend



Zoom Meeting, October 27, 2020

the membership of all active members for one year.

We still do not have a Board Chair. The other Board members have all agreed to serve for another year, and will stand for election during the next general meeting, which is tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, December 15 at 7pm. Watch your email for confirmation.

With these announcements out of the way, **Andrew Carruthers** began a presentation of his ambitious new project to build a violin exclusively from woods grown in Sonoma County. Actually, it is not a new ambition - he originally thought of it five years ago,

but didn't have the time to get it in motion. But now, with COVID, he has decided the time has come. He sees it as an opportunity to paint a portrait of the county and its resources as seen through the making of a violin. His plan is to collect the various materials, then document the whole process in a blog, including who donated the materials and any businesses or craftsmen involved.

The project is now alive on the internet and known as [TheRedwoodViolin.org](http://TheRedwoodViolin.org). Initially he planned to donate the violin to the Youth Orchestra, but it has grown into much more. They are planning on holding a concert with the finished instrument in March 2021. There is also some excitement about it being used by the Santa Rosa Symphony, and perhaps performing some commissioned works.



There followed an active discussion of the various materials needed for the project, and where they might be obtained in Sonoma County. Andrew began by pointing out that ordinarily violin materials come from all over the world: ebony, spruce, maple. Andrew is thinking

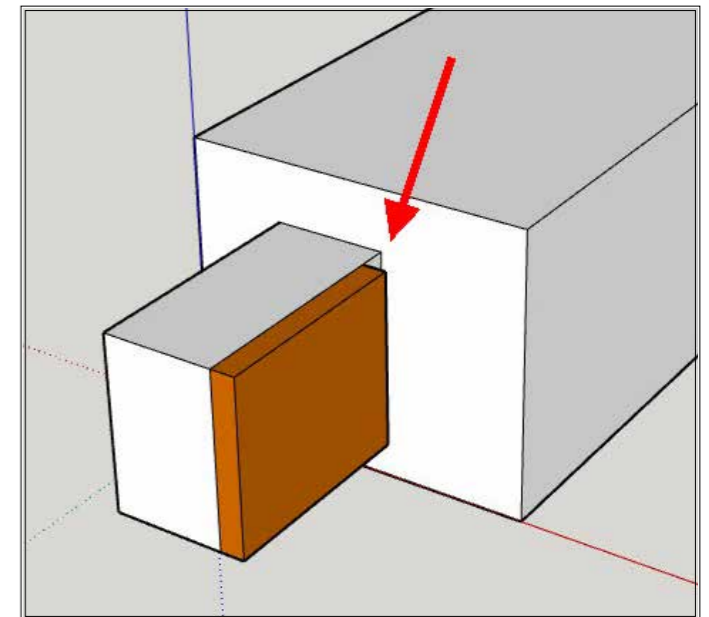
of using apple wood in place of maple for the sides, back, and neck. He is also on the hunt for walnut shells to make black dye for the purfling, and walnut meat to make oil for the finish. Cork has some use on a violin, and he is researching the use of cork in Sonoma County. Hide glue is another material that is key in making a violin, and he has a contact with a local slaughterhouse that he hopes will be helpful in that regard. Dogfish skin is a useful abrasive (any fishermen out there?), as is equisetum, commonly known as horsetail and found in many waterways. There is a list of numerous materials he needs on the [TheRedwoodViolin.org](http://TheRedwoodViolin.org) website.

The evening's "Ask the Expert" Q and A format flowed very nicely, the result of having some questions in advance of the meeting, which offered the experts the opportunity to fine tune their answers.

First in the batter's box was **Mark Tindley**, who was asked about mortise and tenon joints, and

what to do when they are cut too loose. Mark began by saying that he has never encountered a woodworking mistake that couldn't be repaired. He also offered the advice that it is almost never a good idea to rush into a repair immediately. The majority of woodworking mistakes are the kind you should go to bed on; a better solution will probably come to you in the morning.

As to loose tenons, the most straightforward repair is to glue another piece of wood on the side, as shown in the picture below, then recut the joint. He suggests gluing the repair piece slightly offset from the shoulder, as this makes it easier to trim with a plane.

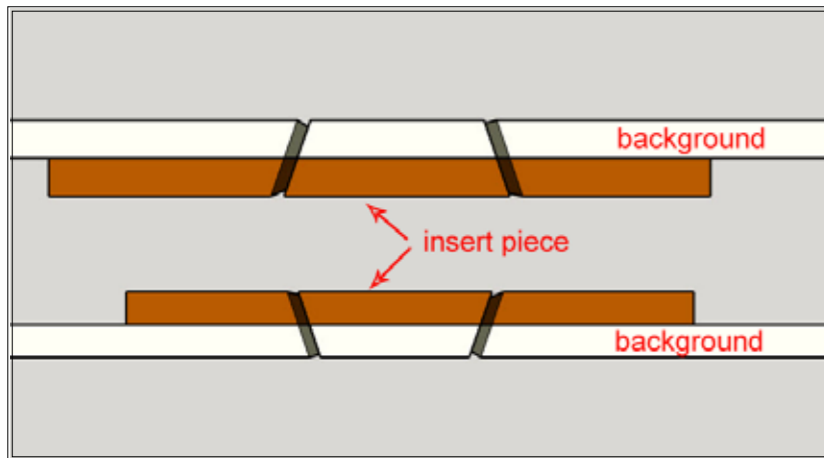


Mark believes the most common reason such joints are cut too loose is because people try to machine everything to finished size. He prefers to machine the joint too tight, then finish the fit by paring with a chisel or a shoulder plane.

Through tenons that are loose can be easily fixed with a wedge driven from the outside to tighten things up. In a worse case scenario where you have completely botched the

tenon, you can just cut it off, cut a mortise where the tenon shoulder should have been, and employ a loose tenon to complete the joinery.

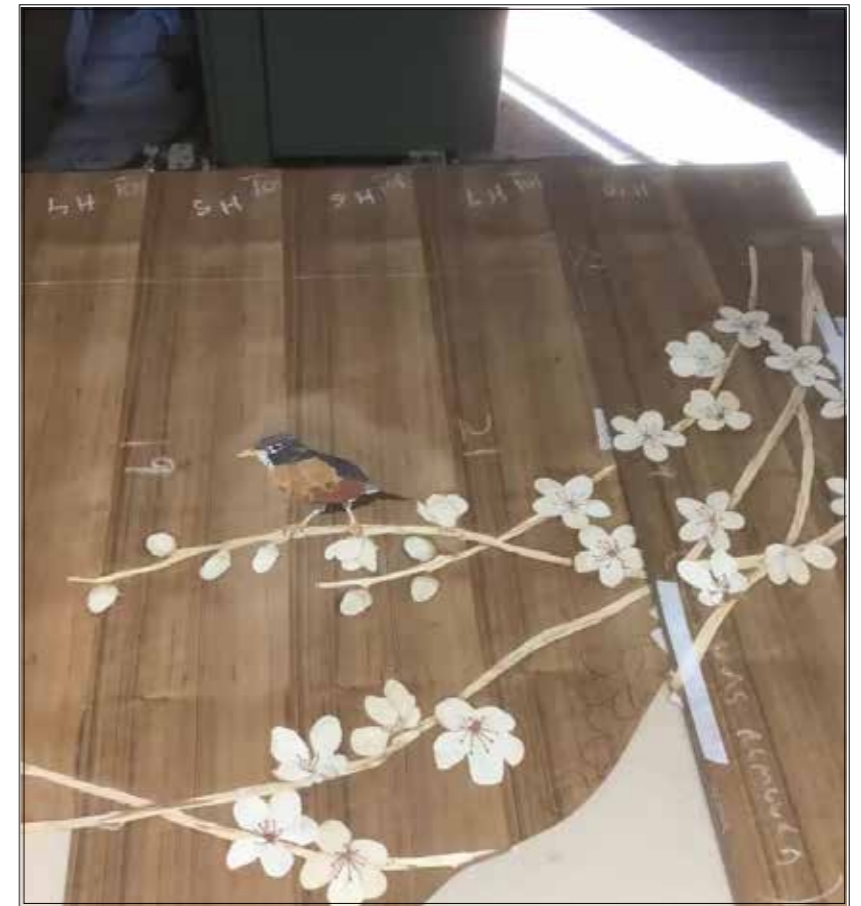
The next question was from Joe Scannell. It involved double-bevel marquetry and was directed to **Greg Zall**. In the double-bevel method, the insert piece can be placed either above or below the background for the cutting process. There are advantages and disadvantages to each method, particularly when the cut involves narrow, sharp points. Joe asked about the



situation where the insert is under the background, and the pattern is on top, and the problem is how to precisely align the grain of an insert piece of veneer with the pattern in preparation for cutting. Many times the grain and color of the piece to be inserted tells the story in such a way that if it is misaligned it appears as a glaring mistake - think of a misplaced eye, for example. If you are Picasso you can get away with it. Otherwise, you ask Greg Zall for help.

Greg responded with a couple of suggestions. The first is that he cuts a window the shape of and slightly smaller than the insert piece, so he can see the piece under the background. He positions the insert for a good visual fit, then attaches it with tape and makes the cut, being careful to angle the blade in the proper direction for the situation. Greg said that even though it's an extra step, he uses this method probably 80% of the time because it works so well.

Another method he uses is to build a subsection of the picture (called a construct) on a scrap piece of background, as, for example, this robin. He then places the construct on *top* of the background and cuts around the whole bird. This is much easier than wrestling a large piece of background through the scroll saw multiple times. To locate the construct exactly where he wants it, he has a drawing of the overall design on the background. He tapes a piece of tracing paper down over this and traces the robin, then lifts the tracing paper up and slips the construct under it and positions it precisely, then tapes the construct down, removes the tracing paper, and makes the cut from above.



Mark Tindley had a third method for precisely locating veneer *under* the background. As seen below, he first locates the veneer on *top* of the background, using the drawing to find the perfect position. He tapes it





there temporarily, then uses a very small drill to make a hole through both pieces of veneer in a sacrificial area of the picture (an area where something else will be subsequently cut in). He then repeats this in a second sacrificial area, so that he now has two alignment holes. Then he dismantles the whole thing and places the insert veneer on the bottom, aligning it using the same drill bits in those holes, tapes everything down, and makes the cut. Greg also fielded a few questions from the audience. He was asked if he made his own veneer or purchased it. He responded that he usually always makes all his own veneer, 1/16" thick, but in this case he needed 9' lengths of teak, sequentially matched, to cover about 25' of wall, and he is unable to even obtain the material for such a job. Fortunately, Certainly Wood had just what he needed, and in 1/16" thickness, so they saved him a lot of work.

Replying to a question, he never uses dyed veneers, and takes pride in telling the customer that he only uses natural colored veneers. He does not disparage dyed veneers, but with all the natural colors available he does not see any reason to go down that road. The integrity of using all natural wood colors gives his work a certain feel that is absent in dyed veneer work.

Jeff Johnson, who lives in the west County, and works in a drafty, damp shop under the redwoods, had a question about rust. He currently carries his tools back and forth from his home to his shop every day to prevent them from rusting.

**Steve Wigfield** responded by suggesting camellia oil, which many of us use. He also said he often applies Renaissance Wax to cast iron tools and machine tops. He stressed the importance of constant maintenance. It's just the price of using tools made of iron.

Another thing he suggested was a Sandflex block by Klingspor, available on Amazon. It is a rubberized block completely embedded with silicon carbide abrasive, and comes in three different grits. Steve uses his to remove grime and rust from old tools he rejuvenates. He prefers these blocks over sandpaper, because sandpaper leaves



scratch patterns that the blocks don't.

Steve also recommended Simichrome polish, also available on Amazon.

Mark Tindley chimed in with another suggestion: store tools like planes in the bags they came in from the manufacturer. These bags contain a rust inhibitor. If you've discarded the original bag, or if it's an old tool, you can buy replacement bags or sheets of paper treated with the same inhibitors. One such product is called Zerust, available on...guess where?

And finally, Mark cautioned against storing chisels in leather tool rolls. This practice seems to foment rust.

Steve Forrest threw out a question about finishing, which Mark bravely undertook to answer. The question was in regard to wet sanding, which is a process of finish sanding with a fine abrasive lubricated with some fluid. In Steve's case, the lubricant under consideration was wax, and Steve wondered if that would then commit him to a wax finish. There followed a discussion of several different finishes, and their compatibility with one another. The bottom line from Mark was that you have two choices: experiment, or call the finish manufacturers and speak to their chemist/tech people to get their opinion. It will probably make their day.

And with that our first virtual meeting drew to a close. I must say, it was great to see everyone. Thanks to all who participated, and special thanks to the Jerebs, Ann for her expertise and Don for his organizational skills. I know everyone is looking forward to the next one.

- Joe Scannell, editor



# Christmas Presents



by Bill Taft

Every year I make Christmas presents for our grandchildren. Often, I start working on them too late, and end up rushing everything just before Christmas. This year the pandemic changed that. I had a lot more time to work on the presents because we could not do many of the things that normally consume some of my time. Here it is the day before Thanksgiving, and this year's presents are finished.

For the past year or so I have been making marquetry pictures of forest animals, wild animals that live in the woods, attempting to depict them as they behave in their natural environment. For this year's Christmas presents I found a picture of a red fox cautiously peeking at an intruder that I felt depicted the behavior that I wanted to present. I found another picture



showing a fox in the forest that I could use for the background of the picture. I called this picture "Peeking Red."

To create Peeking Red I drew three pictures: one of the fox, one of the forest background, and one of the tree that Red was hiding behind. I draw these pictures on tracing paper. It allows me to overlay them so that the pieces can be properly positioned. These drawings are all standard paper size, the same size as the Peeking Red picture. I used these three drawings to make the marquetry patterns for the pictures.

The background of the picture is a piece of 1/8th inch thick birch plywood. All of the leaves and branches were cut directly into this background board. Red was cut into another piece of plywood that was exactly the same size as the background plywood piece. All of the veneers are 1/8th inch thick. With the marquetry completed for these two pieces, the Red part of the "Red construct" was cut into the background piece. To complete the pictures, I cut the tree pieces into the background piece. All of the marquetry cutting is double bevel marquetry, done on my 16 inch scroll saw.

I found a piece of canary wood that had a lot of color variation, and that was used to make the red parts of Red. The grey parts are from many pieces of grey poplar and some pieces of holly. The leaves are from two pieces of green poplar, one of them being darker than the other. The tree pieces are from a piece of ash. The frames are all from one piece of cherry.

When the marquetry was completed, the pictures were sanded flat and then bonded



*Peeking Red by Bill Taft*

*Photos courtesy Bill Taft*

to a 1/8th inch thick birch plywood backing board with the primary grain directions of the two pieces perpendicular to each other. This is the best method that I have found to minimizing warping when using only thin veneers. After bonding, the pictures were finish sanded, ending with 400 grit sandpaper to remove as much of the cross grain scratches as possible. The finish is many, many coats of Zinsser wax-free shellac, sanding between each coat. The final coat is sanded, then rubbed out with steel wool and finally polished with a knit cotton rag.

Making these gifts was fun for me, a great way to occupy my time during the pandemic.

As this edition of the *Wood Forum* goes to press, things are moving along in preparation for the 2020 *Artistry in Wood (Lite)*. I'm not sure what the Museum plans on calling it, so that will have to do for now. In any event, the entries have been selected by the Museum staff from the field of submissions, and exhibitors are dropping off their entries from December 1-4, 2020. Snapshots on the following page depict some of this year's entries, as of December 3.



# Artistry in Wood 2020



Drop-off  
Sneak  
Preview



## Officers of the Association

<u>Chairman</u>		<u>Secretary</u>	Lars Andersen
<u>Program Chair</u>	Michael Finizio	<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 4176, Santa Rosa, CA 95402