

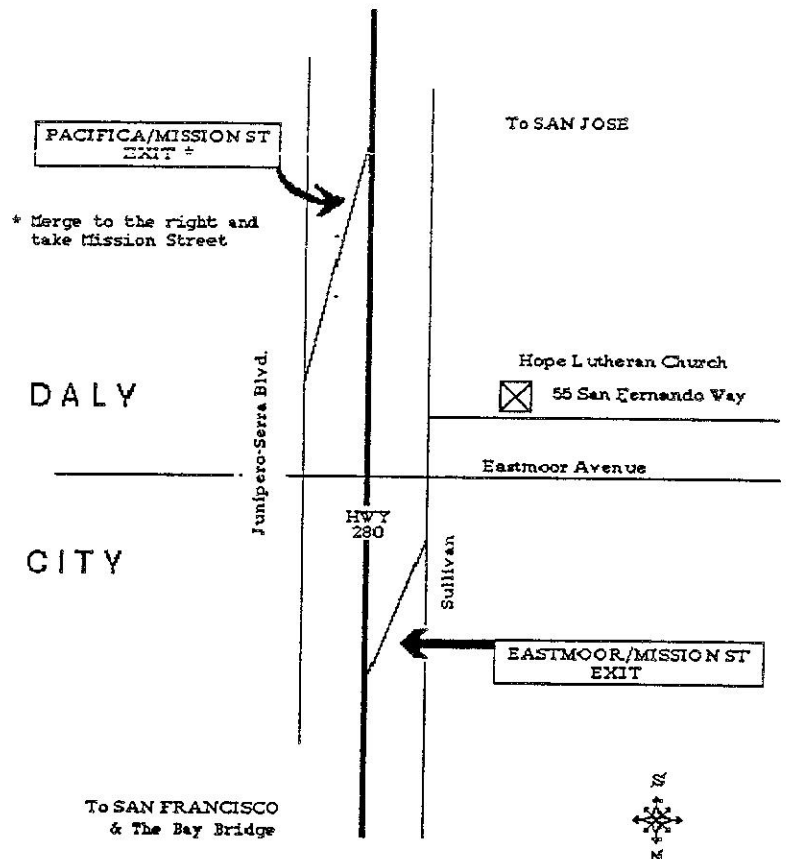
BAY AREA WOODWORKERS ASSOCIATION

DECEMBER, 1989, VOL.8, ISSUE 12

DECEMBER MEETING - FIRST THURSDAY

As agreed upon at the November meeting, the December BAWA meeting will be held on Thursday, December 7, 1989 at 7:30 p.m. at the Hope Lutheran Church in Daly City (see map). This meeting is being held early in the month due to the holidays.

Unfortunately, the Christmas potluck dinner has been canceled this year and the December meeting will be a general business meeting. Topics to be discussed will include (but not be limited to) BAWA's direction for 1990, the Board of Directors, and possible topics and sites for future meetings. With the reopening of the Bay Bridge, we look forward to a good turnout for the December meeting. All members are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to help BAWA meet the interests of its ever-evolving membership.





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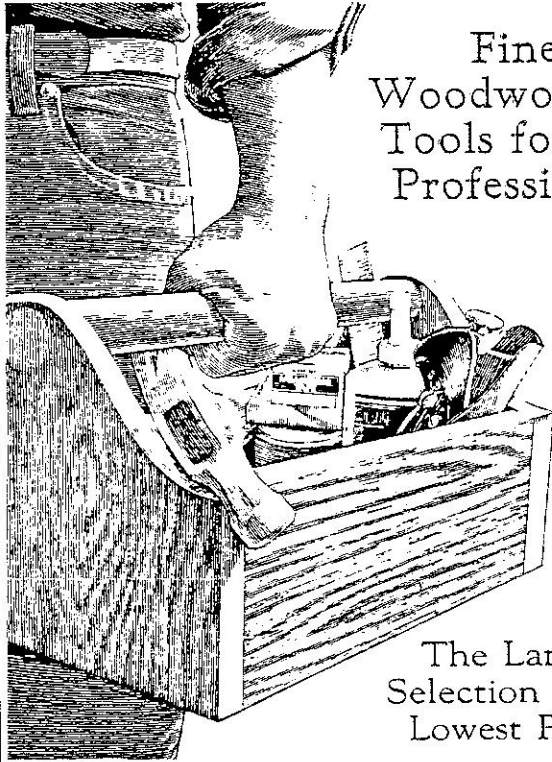
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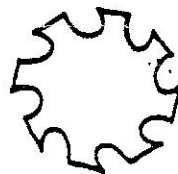
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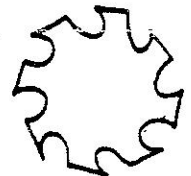
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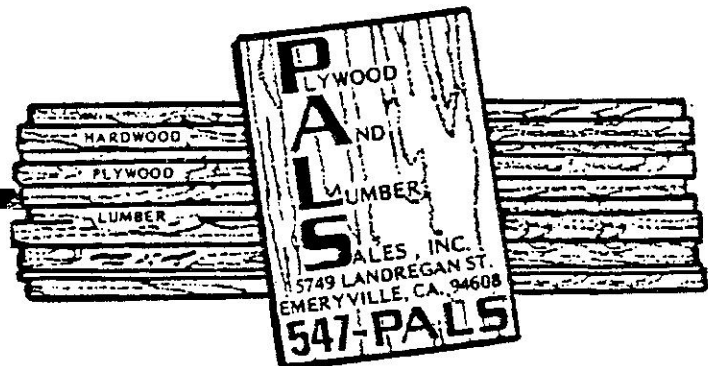
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Highlights from the November Meeting

The November meeting was held at the Owner Builder Center (OBC) in Berkeley. Glen Kitzenberger, our host for the evening, gave us an overview of the classes and services offered at the OBC. Among the classes offered by OBC are evening seminars on specific topics including methods of making homes more resistant to earthquake damage. Other instruction at the OBC include: (1) Saturday seminars; one day, in-depth explorations of topics such as "Home Remodeling - Avoiding the Pitfalls" (18 different classes), (2) housebuilding and remodeling class, a 17 session evening course which provides the foundation for any level of participation from do-it-yourself to owner contracting, (3) 11 different Hands-On Workshops which provide direct experience in specific construction trades. All the classes make extensive use of charts, hand-outs, product samples and hands-on mock-ups.

One of the Saturday seminars offered at OBC is Cabinet Refacing which is taught by BAWA member-Dick Taylor. Dick discussed some highlights of this class at the BAWA meeting, such as refinishing versus refacing, professional versus do-it-yourself, and some of the appropriate technology regarding drawer faces, cabinet doors, etc.

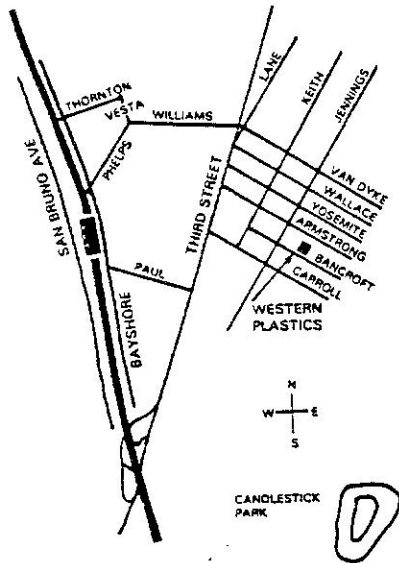
Glen indicated that any BAWA member may attend one session of the housebuilding and remodeling class free of charge to get a better feel for the substance of the course. In addition to the classes mentioned above, Glen indicated that the OBC also provides a contractor referral service and a summer building camp.

-continued on page 5

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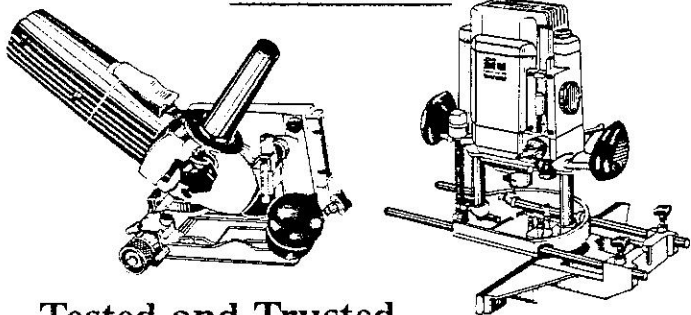
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To give BAWA members a feel for the experience and expertise of the OBC staff, Glen also gave a slide presentation of the design and construction of his personal on-site tool box. This item actually consists of three separate boxes which fit together via cleats and grooves to prevent them from sliding off each other. This provides some flexibility in their manner of arrangement and also makes it possible to move the unit without calling in the heavy equipment operator. The overall length and width of the unit is based on being able to accommodate a framing square and approximately 800 other tools plus hardware. Each of the boxes contains a number of drawers ranging in depth from 1.25" to 2.5" and tools are arranged by both their function and thickness. Overall, the tool box was very well arranged and is certain to be a real time-saver on the job.

We thank Glen and the OBC for hosting the November meeting. For further information on class schedules, fees, etc., the OBC can be reached at 415-848-6860.

A hasty look through the results of the recent survey of what the members liked at our meetings revealed that the highest ratings went to: "How-to demos," Shop practices/methods, Equipment demos, Business methods, and famous woodworkers. Low ratings went to slide shows, Commercial presentations/product reps, and book reviews.

-5-


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The ILL FATED OCTOBER MEETING

The October meeting was intended to be an opportunity for everyone who is interested in helping with committees and offices to get together and talk and start organizing for a great year. Then, just to hinder our organization, the Earthquake struck. There were only 7 of us at the meeting. The Bay Area was split in half, and all hope of getting a strong start to 1990 was gone.

We did have a good discussion, and interesting ideas were bounced around. There was much concern over whether the professional woodworkers in the group were getting enough out of the organization now that the percentage of amateurs is increasing. Perhaps there should be a subgroup to focus on the interests of those who make their living working with wood, or perhaps some of the regular meetings could be oriented towards the pros.

There was a certain amount of controversy over whether the honorable old word "professional" should be applied to someone who makes a living from woodworking but is an ignoramus who cares nothing for craftsmanship. A good point, but until someone finds a one-word synonym for "person-who-earns-a-living-from-woodworking," we will all probably have to continue to talk about to 'pros' and 'amateurs.'

I personally don't think that the interests of the two groups are really in conflict. We live in a world of ceaseless change and turmoil. Any amateur might suddenly find himself or herself turning pro. And any smart pro will be always ready to learn something new, possible from an amateur who has time to experiment and explore, without economic pressure keeping him at the same old grindstone.

Kevin Seeger, our President, told us how the Executive Board had become bogged-down trying to do all the programming and the newsletter and everything else, with no time left-over for leading the organization. The need for some effective committees was obvious to all. (And it looks like some of them are starting to come together. But there is still plenty of room for more folks to jump in and help. When the committees are large, no one person has to do too much, and everybody has fun. I've heard suggestions for some excellent projects just waiting to happen. One is a referral-list, so we can refer people to BAWA members who have specific skills. Another is a video-tape library. We probably have the money, if someone will organize it.)

John Weidner

CAN THIS CRAZY THING BE TRUE?

Perhaps some brave soul will try this and report to the newsletter.

WHAT DOES OIL DO FOR SHARPENING?

Now this might come as a shock to you, and some of you may even want to make sure you're sitting down for this one, but if you use oil in sharpening, it will: Number one—cost you money. Number two—make a mess. Number three—give you an inferior edge. Yep, we know, everything you have ever read told you to have a 55-gallon drum of oil on hand to pour on your hone whenever you wanted to sharpen a blade, or you'd never get it sharp. Now don't feel bad, because we thought the same thing when we first started experimenting. Never will forget that case of whale oil some sharp salesman sold us, claiming it would do some special hocus-pocus on an edge.

We would really like to tell you a big, spectacular story about how we discovered as a result of brilliant experimenting that oil is just one more of the many old wives' tales about sharpening, but we don't tell fibs. (Well, not too many.) The fact of the matter is we just happened to stumble over this, as is true with so many of the things we have learned about sharpening. Seems like so many times we would try to study a certain subject, and the end result would be a big flop. But in the process we would, many times stumble onto something we weren't really looking for, or maybe learn something we would store in the back of our minds for use further on down the road.

We encountered a problem with using oil when we first started demonstrating at sports shows around the country. How do you sharpen all those knives, with all that oil? Heck, we could drown in oil! So rather than use oil, we just kept our hones clean as best we could, and thought we could always switch to a new hone when the dirty one quit working. But guess what. The hones

just kept going... and kept going... and kept going. Both the coarse and the fine. And then we noticed something else. Our edges seemed to be better than when we were using oil. Strange, huh? So then we ran a series of tests and found it to be true: you get much better edges without the use of oil.

One day we got a call from a professional knife manufacturer asking us what we thought we could do for his edges in one of the largest beef packing plants in the world. We assured him we could do well, so the company picked us up and flew us out to their plant. When we got to the sharpening room, we found ourselves a corner to work in and started sharpening knives. The people out on the cutting lines thought the edges were great. The second day we were there, the superintendent came into the sharpening room to watch us, and, not surprisingly, asked, "How come you're not using oil?" We explained that we found the edges to be better without the use of oil. "But everybody uses oil to sharpen. Why don't you just try it and see what happens?" So we did. He brought in a can of oil, and we added a generous portion to our hones. It wasn't that long afterward when he came back into the sharpening room. "Something is going wrong. The guys out there are complaining about that last batch of knives. What do you think happened?" We questioned him a little about the complaints and then told him we thought the problem was the oil. So we went back to clean hones and started sharpening again. A short while later, the superintendent came back and reported that his butchers were once again happy with their knives.

The question is, why did the edges deteriorate so quickly when we used oil? The answer is this. The grit that has been worn from the hone becomes suspended in the oil with the metal filings from the blade, and you get a grinding com-

pound, similar to the stuff used to grind the valves on your car. Running your knife through this compound is like running it through a pile of sand. The edge comes into direct contact with the abrasive, and you get a poor edge. (Any edge coming in direct contact with a hard object, such as an abrasive, is in trouble.)

A typical example of this would be a farmer's plow. When it is new, it is reasonably sharp, but from there it just goes downhill. The reason the plow gets dull is that the abrasive passes over both sides of the blade—if there was contact on only one side, it would sharpen itself.

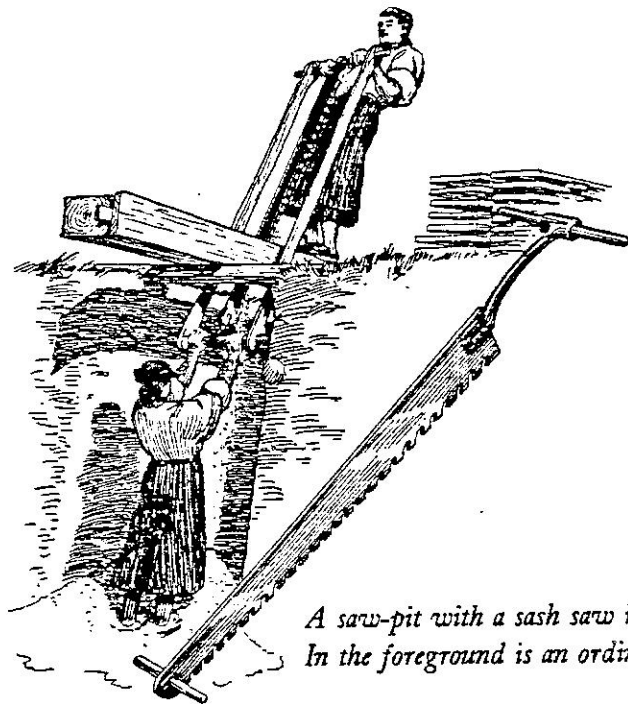
So we have now learned that when abrasive material passes over the top of the edge, you are "plowing," and consequently ruining your edge. Oil greatly contributes to this plowing effect, as do hones that are not clean. And because edges are microscopic, this is especially true of the fine hone. Now this would not apply if you had a constant flow of clean oil that would continuously wash the particles away. But what a mess you would have. The same theory applies to water, only you won't have quite the mess because the water will eventually evaporate.

After our experience in that packing plant with the oil we went into further study on the subject. We used electron microscopes with magnifications of up to 10,000 power, and you could easily see the difference between the wet and dry edges. The edges that had been sharpened in oil had small chips knocked out of the cutting edge; the dry-sharpened blades did not.

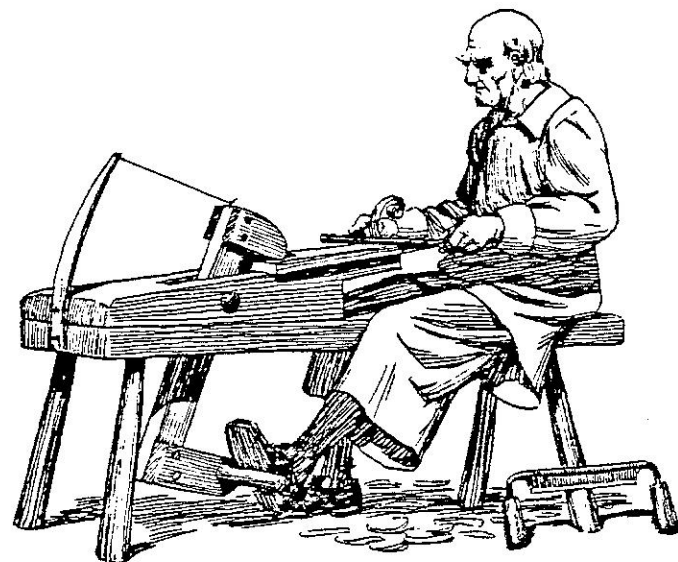
None of the machines we supply to the packing industry uses oil, and these machines sharpen the knives of thousands of professionals every day. So the next time someone tries to sell you oil for your sharpening, just tell him to stick in his crankcase—like we should have told the whale oil salesman.

This is an excerpt from THE RAZOR EDGE BOOK OF SHARPENING
By John Juranitch, Warner Books 1985

These illustrations are from COLONIAL LIVING, By Edwin Tunis, Crowell Co 1957

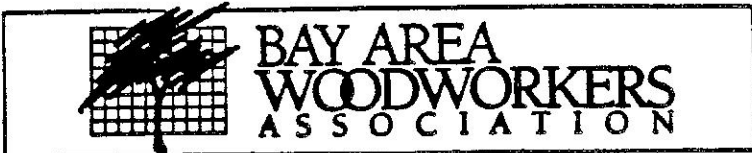


A saw-pit with a sash saw in use.
In the foreground is an ordinary pit saw



A shingle horse in use.
An extra drawknife leans against one leg

BAWA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION



Bay Area Woodworkers Association was formed early in 1982 by a small group of dedicated people who felt the need to strengthen the woodworking community by holding regular meetings, establishing an informal forum for the exchange of knowledge and ideas, sponsoring shows, and meeting others in woodworking and related fields. Since then, this non-profit organization has grown to many members. Meetings occur in the third week of each month at 7:00 p.m. and are generally held in San Francisco or Oakland/Berkeley area. Meetings usually have a specific topic such as router techniques, finishing, turning, business aspects of woodworking, or focus on a distinguished guest speaker who will give a presentation in their area of expertise. Most meetings are held in members shops, or the place of business of a guest presenter. Members receive a monthly newsletter.

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PLEASE INDICATE WHICH COMMITTEES YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN

- A. PROGRAM: Coordinate monthly meeting subjects and locations, field trips, and Saturday workshops.
- B. SHOWS: Coordinate participation in Trade shows and Exhibits of BAWA members' work.
- C. HOSPITALITY: Handle refreshments, sign in, name tags, and greeting people at the monthly meetings.
- D. Historical/Library: Maintain binders with past newsletters, publications, slide collection, and video tapes.
- E. COMMUNITY OUTREACH: Coordinate an annual project such as the Larkin St. Center or several smaller projects.
- F. PUBLICITY: Submit information to area newspapers about upcoming meetings, shows, etc.
- G. SOCIAL COMMITTEE: Coordinate events like the golf tournament, baseball games, ski trip, and whatever.
- H. NOMINATING COMMITTEE: Select possible candidates for offices to be elected at the November meeting.
- I. NEWSLETTER: Several staff are needed to divide up the job of printing the monthly newsletter. This is a vital part of BAWA both through the income from the advertisers (without their support dues would be doubled) and the communication link to the members.

COMMENTS: _____

