

# BAY AREA WOODWORKERS ASSOCIATION

November, 1984 - Issue 11, Volume 3 . PO Box 421195 . San Francisco, CA 94142

## THIRD THURSDAY PREVIEW

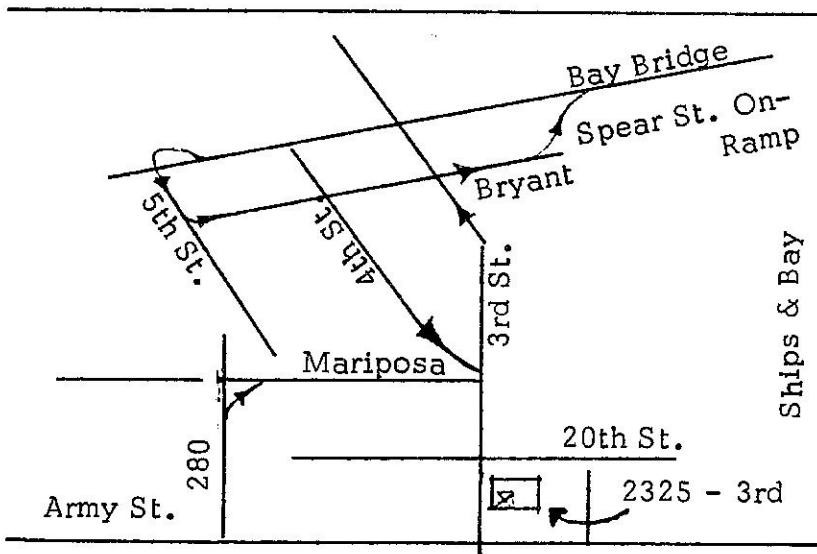
The November meeting will be on the 15th at 7:30 PM, cleverly avoiding Thanksgiving (the 22nd). The host will be Bob Greenberg, who hopes to have a new harpsichord ready for delivery to the East Coast by the 15th (the purchaser is coming by on the 10th to see how things are going). Directions to Bob's ship follow. Bob will demonstrate something of the instrument's musical qualities. The major matter of interest to fellow woodworkers will be a demonstration of the large bending iron constructed a few months ago, and used to form the curved sections of the harpsichord. Other builders have come by with planks and plans too. In October, we bent a 10-inch-wide board into an S-shape for a Santa Cruz maker. The smaller bend was wrestled to a 12 inch radius. As far as Bob knows, this machine is the only one of its kind in the country, though violin makers and other luthiers have used smaller bending irons for centuries. For those interested in special finishes, the harpsichord case could be of interest. It is banded in faux marbre by Don Honnert, who spoke to BAWA some months ago.

DIRECTIONS: Bob's shop is along the San Francisco Waterfront, at 2325 Third Street, #425. The cross street is 20th Street. From the East Bay, take the Fifth Street exit from the bridge; turn left onto Fifth. After a couple of blocks, take a left to Fourth Street. Right on Fourth til' it merges with Third. Continue south on Third until 20th and park along Third. You will be among the many who do so. There is a passenger elevator to the fourth floor. Phone is 552-1870.

### HURRAH FOR SISTER SARAH!

In 1810 Sister Sarah Babbitt of the Harvard, Mass. Shaker community was watching lumber being sawn into boards with a pit saw. She observed that half the saw's action was lost in the upward pull of the blade. Consumed with this revelation she took a tin dish, cut notches around the edge and fastened it to the spindle of her spinning wheel. Twirling the wheel she gently eased a shingle into the rotating teeth and cut the shingle in half. The Circular saw was born!

Humbolt Woodworking Society Newsletter, 3/84



NOTES ON OCTOBER MEETING: Scott Rich was bright and young and clever and quite complete while speaking on and showing a film strip about electric motor controls. What they are and why they fail seemed to me to be the chief matters of concern for woodworking power tool owners. Scott's full presentation explained many points only dimly understood before his talk—at least, for me. John Grew-Sheridan demonstrated a large laminating form for making curved chair-backs. He raised a question about how to keep glue (in this case, Plastic Resin "brown" glue) from penetrating the thin veneer on the faces of the laminate. Another member of BAWA also had some telegraphing glue-spots and had to resort to a sprayed lacquer glaze. If a BAWA member knowledgeable about a process for metering glue, or how to keep it from striking through veneer, would mention what to do to avoid this problem, John would appreciate it. Other BAWA members brought slides and a few prints of recent work; Scott Page showed a fine table that he had made for his own use. The legs were turned by Gail Redman.

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NOTES ON EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING: The major matter of continuing interest is that the next executive committee meeting will not take place on Thanksgiving, but rather on Saturday, November 17, in the afternoon, at 3:30 PM, at Byron Montague's house in Berkeley: 904-A Bancroft Way. Byron's phone is 540-8826. The planning for the December meeting, devoted to the subject of bidding, continues. Expect a rough idea of the project to appear in the next Newsletter: those able can then devise their bids, and match them with the volunteer bidders at the December meeting.

-- Bob Greenberg

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# BAWA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

and

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July - Dec., 1984

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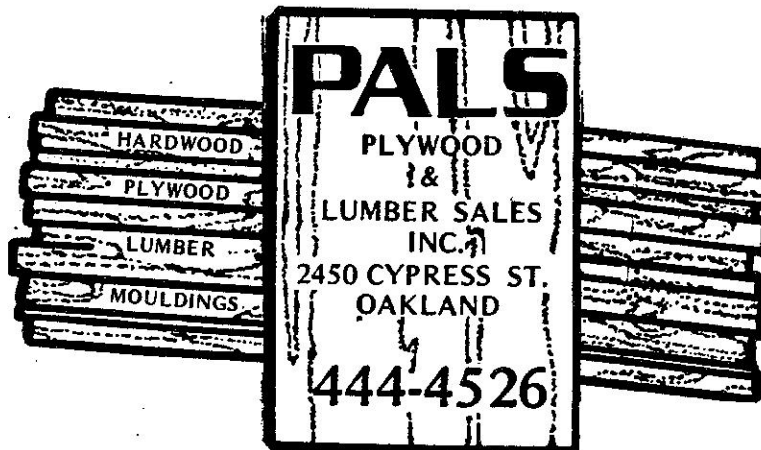
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8/4 Alder  
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4/4 FAS E.B. Walnut  
4/4 So. Ash  
8/4 Ash  
4/4 Phil. Mahog.  
1x12 Phil. Mahog.  
1x12 #3 P.P  
4/4 Poplar  
8/4 Poplar  
4/4 FAS White Oak  
4/x FAS Natural Birch

Jeff Hunt  
Manuel (MG) Gutierrez

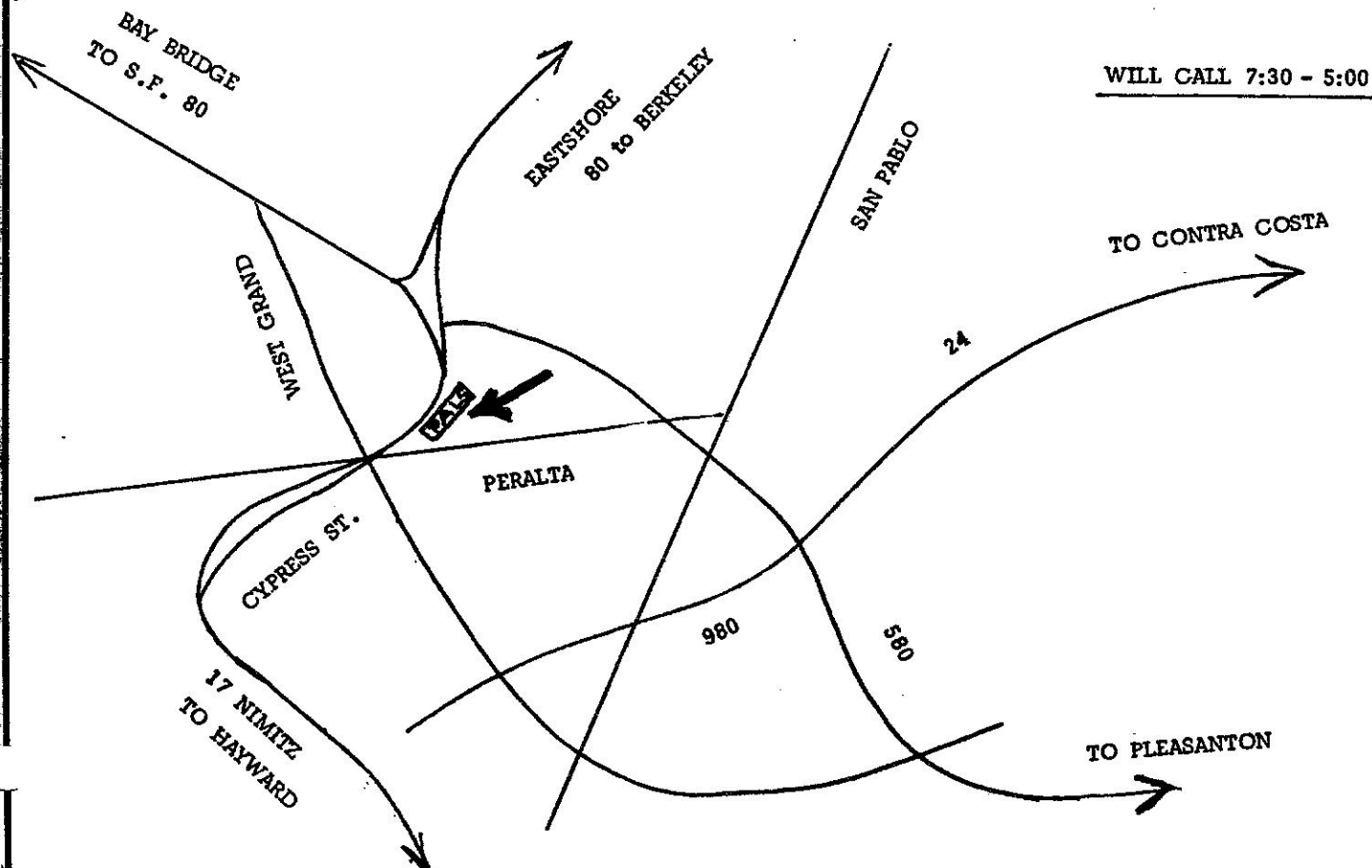
Patrick Kozisek  
Armand Mazie

### SPECIALS

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## WORKING IN WOOD

By Melanie Fleischmann

As decorators—both professional and not—look for furniture designs that are alternatives to the glass, chrome and steel of recent years, as well as to strictly traditional pieces, attention has begun to be paid to a group of American woodworkers who craft each of their original designs by hand. The inspiration for their pieces, however, differs—from sculptural forms to early American furniture.

Clearly, the swing from the primarily functional toward the decorative, and from the mass-produced toward the one-of-a-kind, is good news for contemporary woodworkers. Unlike architects or designers-cum-furniture-makers, woodworkers "are actually working with the materials, not designing something for someone else to manufacture," says John Everdell, a Prominent Cambridge, Mass., woodworker. "This hasn't happened since the late 1800's Arts and Crafts Movement, or at least it was extremely diminished. But it is becoming revitalized."

And revitalized it is. In fact, the furniture of Wendell Castle, one of the most prominent woodworkers, has commanded as much as \$75,000 for a single piece. While Castle is one of the old guard in the woodworking community, the new generation is not faring badly either. The Cooper-Hewitt Museum, part of the Smithsonian Institution, has just commissioned a pair of chairs for its collection from 27-year-old woodworker Thomas Loeser. And there are other signs of acceptance. The furniture retailer Workbench, which opened a subsidized gallery for woodworkers is one of its New York City stores in 1980, now charges a commission on the sales it generates.

The growing popularity of handmade furniture is due to a variety of circumstances. One, according to woodworkers, was the 1981 introduction of Memphis, a collection of bold and saucy furniture by a Milan-based group of international designers and architects. "Memphis," John Everdell says, "is the recognized avant-garde. It has blown open people's expectations of furniture." As a result, Everdell feels, it has also opened a lot of doors for woodworkers.

"Memphis made the idiosyncratic stylish," agrees Mitch Ryerson, another Cambridge woodworker. "People now think in terms of living with our furniture."

Another plus for the woodworking community is the fact that people seem to be looking for something other than glass and chrome-plated steel furniture. Yet nothing had replaced it; anyone looking for furniture that was personal, fresh and decorative, and made with careful attention to quality, encountered a void. As John Everdell says, "We fill it."

For Everdell, a primary influence has been the early Arts and Crafts Movement "with high-tech and pop-culture sensibilities." The 35-year-old woodworker says that he is "striving for a sense of quality, and to make furniture that is new, but not without derivations. The intended feeling is one of an unspecified familiarity.... I try to bring a certain accessibility to the pieces."

Jack Larimore, 34, a Philadelphia woodworker, says that he is "influenced by anything I see." Not unlike Everdell, he thinks "furniture should be approachable." Of his "China Blue Gothic" chair of upholstered hardwood, he says, "It is not a visually challenging piece. I imagine it in a setting with artwork, for I think it would be supportive of art. I also envision the chairs being in pairs, with a small table between them. The chair was inspired by Chinese furniture and by Gothic architecture, and is meant to provide both comfort and architectural presence in a room."

The main inspiration for Thomas Loeser's "Folding Chair" was, he says, "the Shaker idea of hanging their ladderback chairs on a chair rail when they weren't using them. This is just an update of that idea, with the added concept of folding the chair. The challenge was to make it work both as a chair and as a wall hanging." Loeser says that the chair went through three generations in its making. "The first was very sculptural and had only three legs. As a chair, it wasn't very functional; in fact, I was about the only one who could sit on it. I had to work to make it functional."

Of his "Wheel Chair," Mitch Ryerson says, "I think of it as a detail in the sort of setting that I live in, which is a mixture of things and styles. I like to think that it is a personal piece, the kind of piece you'd walk in and toss your hat on." One of a group of woodworkers operating out of the Cambridgeport Cooperative Woodshop, a 10-year-old group near Boston, Ryerson cites folk art as his main influence. "I admire what I call the 'unschooled' thinking of folk artists — I don't think primitive is an appropriate word. But they made furniture for themselves and for their friends. It seems as though they always had a person in mind when they made something. I want my pieces to be that expressive."

Reprinted from The New York Times "Home Design Magazine," April 15, 1984.

Four prominent woodworkers pose with their chairs, from left to right: John Everdell with his side chair of padauk and ebony. It is \$1,500 through The Gallery at Workbench, 470 Park Avenue South at 32d Street. Jack Larimore with his "China Blue Gothic" chair, which has a hardwood frame, cotton velvet and leather upholstery, and a drawer under its seat. It is \$2,800 through The Gallery at Workbench. Tom Loeser with his hand-painted folding chair of Baltic-birch plywood, curly maple and stainless steel. Its price is \$1,500 through the Heller Gallery, 71 Greene Street. Mutch Ryerson with his "Wheel Chair" of painted maple. For \$1,200, it is available through The Gallery at Workbench.



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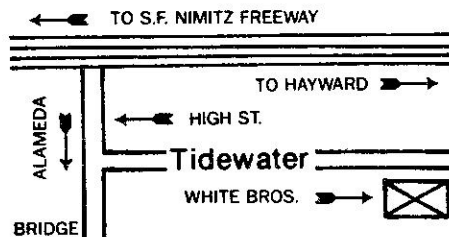
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The SONOMA COUNTY WOODWORKERS will have a major show at the Luther Burbank Center, which is next to Highway 101 in Santa Rosa, from November 17th through the 25th; 9-5 each day. It promises to be worth the trip but call before going to be sure it's open.

Your NEWSLETTER STAFF would like to remind the members that they will probably be receiving after the December elections a smaller Newsletter format. No one has offered to assist or assume the job so it appears that a simpler, more concise missive that is also cheaper to produce will suit our needs.

ELLIOT APATOV is looking for a new shop. If you have a lead call him at 543-1044. Development continues South of Market.

The BAULINES GUILD is showing at the California Crafts Museum in Ghirardelli Square in SF from November 3rd to January 6th. The phone for information is 771-1919.

If anyone has a single spindle boring machine (Davis & Wells, etc.) for sale please call John G-S at 824-6161. Thanks.

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CLARIFICATION: In the October Newsletter we reported that Mike Laine said "A \$35 Japanese plywood plane with a good laminated chip breaker is better than one that costs \$100." Instead, Mike says it should read, "A \$35 Japanese plane with a laminated chip breaker is as good or better than any modern plane I have ever seen. A \$100 Japanese plane has no equal in any modern Western tool production." Seems the Editor got caught with his quotes down.

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#### NEW MAGNETIC JOINTER JIG

A frustrating task which normally takes woodworkers more than an hour, replacing jointer knives, can now be done in less than ten minutes! Magna-Set, a unique, new magnetic jointer knife setting jig, manufactured by Quest Industries, makes the time saving possible and also assures increased jointer efficiency, accuracy, and safety, according to its manufactures.

Traditional, imprecise jointer knife changing methods have plagued woodworkers since the invention of the jointer. The old methods would usually result in imperfect jointer cutting because one or more of the jointer knives would be re-set too low or too high or out of parallel with the outfeed table or would squirm out of position when tightened in place. Because of its patented magnetic design, however, Magna-Set firmly holds each knife in perfect alignment and at precisely the correct height.

Quest Industries claims the jig will work on any type of jointer table surface including steel, aluminum, wood, or plastic laminate, and it will accurately hold any kind of steel alloy jointer knife, including carbide. The jig is constructed of rugged half inch steel, permanent magnets, and hardened steel drill rod. Magna-Set is fully adjustable, fitting any size jointer, and it weights thirteen ounces. According to a company spokesman, the tool is guaranteed to enable jointers to produce a finish cut with a tolerance of plus or minus .0005 of an inch. Magna-Set carries a lifetime, money-back guarantee, retails for \$39.95 and first appeared on the market in July, 1984. For further information contact: Magna-Set/Quest Industries, Department PO Box 7768, Murray, Utah 84107, phone (801) 973-0896.

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## THE HARDWOOD MARKET

Wood importer, Bob Collins, spoke at a recent Santa Cruz WW meeting. His comments about imported hardwood follow and raise questions about the pricing of exotics at some yards.

Since the buying power of the US dollar is good in many foreign markets, commercially new species are being imported as well as other, usually expensive, exotics at a new more affordable price. For instance, Bob predicts that we will see a greater availability of African Vermillion and Bubinga in the near future.

-- Some woods -- like Indonesian Teak, that has been all but clearcut in its first generation growth; and East Indian Rosewood, that has been scarce due to an agricultural ban on cutting -- will once again be available at better prices due to many new lumber plantation businesses. However, some woods like Cuban Mahogany (which has been all but unavailable since WWII) are too slow-growing for such commercial cultivation to be economically feasible.

-- Iroko has been successfully used as a Teak substitute (it was used for decking on the Queen Elizabeth II). Although it is dimensionally less stable than Teak, the color is similar, it lacks Teak's problematic silica content, and at \$2.50 - \$3.00/BDFT its price makes it worth consideration.

-- Hawaiian Koa is, unfortunately, on its way to rarity due in great part to reduced harvesting of the Parker ranch and discontinuation of many Koa reforestation projects. Koa was originally a transplant from its native Australia and, because of the more humid climate, developed richer colors when grown in Hawaii. Aussie Koa will remain expensive on account of the great expenses involved in importing it from down-under. The good news is that Shedua, a viable Koa substitute, will soon be available in greater quantities at affordable prices. Shedua was used extensively for many years in Baldwin pool tables.

-- Another relatively unknown wood that may soon achieve recognition as a "substitute" wood is called Tangili. This dark-red import from the Philippines is 8% stronger than the Honduran Mahogany it resembles, is close-grained, details well, and will supposedly be inexpensive.

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### BAWA DATA

The Bay Area Woodworkers' Association is an organization of woodworkers who have banded together to promote woodworking in both technical and aesthetic directions. This newsletter is a monthly publication intended to serve as a communications vehicle and a source directory for the membership of this Association.

**Membership dues** are \$20/year, for which any member may participate fully in the Association, in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the By-Laws. This includes voting power on any issue brought before the membership for a vote, notification of the monthly shop talks and demonstrations put on by the Association, receipt of this newsletter each month, and privilege of participation in any special discount programs sponsored by local businesses in conjunction with this Association.

**Checks for membership dues** may be made out to the Bay Area Woodworkers' Association and sent to P.O. Box 421195, San Francisco, CA 94142. Membership cards will be issued to all members in good standing.

**Copies of the By-Laws** are available at all monthly meetings, or can be requested by mail.

**The monthly shop talks and demonstrations** are held on the third Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m., at a location announced both in the newsletter and at the previous meeting.

**The monthly executive committee meetings** are held on the fourth Thursday of every month, and are open to any interested members. To arrange attendance, contact any member of the executive committee by telephone or the address given above.

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