

BAY AREA WOODWORKERS ASSOCIATION

DECEMBER

November, 1985 - Issue 12, Vol.4

Box 421195 San Francisco CA 94142

THIRD THIRSDAY PREVIEW

The December meeting will be at 7:30 pm at HIDA TOOL & HARDWARE CO., INC. located at 1333 San Pablo Ave, Berkeley, 524-3700. Osamu Hiroshima shall be our host. We shall hear of the traditions and use of Japanese hand tools. See "From the Chair" for further background.

This is the time for semi-annual elections. We will also be voting on monetary compensation for executive board members to complement all the other altruistic reasons anyone would accept a position. Now you have even more reason to come and take an active part.

The proposed stipends are as follows:

Chairman: \$100

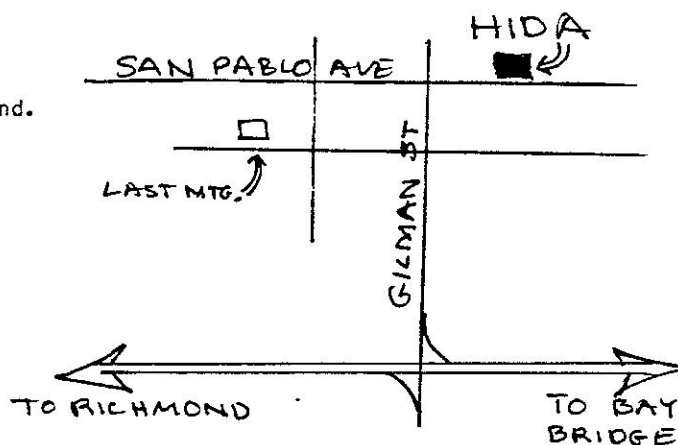
Secretary: 50

Treasurer: 50

Mailing List: 50

Editor: 100

Special project stipends to be determined by exec.comm.



SPOTLIGHT

Steve Savitch shall bring in two jewelry boxes from his limited edition production runs. Also we can go through his portfolio of cabinetry and furniture. (For those many BAWA members who finish, deliver and invoice work all in the same day, portfolios seem to be the obvious way to get in the spotlight.)

Don Dupont will show a painted bathroom vanity cabinet with Corian top using an inlaid edge treatment.

NOTES FROM THE LAST MEETING

The meeting was brought to order by Chairman Don Dupont at 7:45 with introduction of visitors. The Treasurer's report estimated \$1,100 current balance. A proposal has been made that Executive Board members receive some compensation to cover time, and telephone expenses. This will be brought up for a vote at the December meeting. An invitation has been extended to B.A.W.A members to participate in the Baulines Guild Show at Macy's in June of '86. A comment was made about poor quality materials from suppliers and suggestions for how to deal with this are solicited.

Business meeting aside, a fine presentation was made by our hosts, Jerry Coe and Dan Dole. Slides were shown of past work followed by a blacksmithing demonstration. That antique power hammer made the whole floor jump.

► FROM THE CHAIR

Our December general meeting should prove to be a fascinating one. Members who are not familiar with Japanese hand tools (the non-electrical kind) should not miss our December general meeting. We will have a presentation of a variety of woodworking tools, how they are made and how they're used. By way of introduction, I quote from Toshio Odate's book Japanese Woodworking Tools: Their Tradition, Spirit and Use. He talks of the shokunin, ". . . defined by both Japanese and Japanese-English dictionaries as 'craftsman' or 'artisan,' but such a literal description does not fully express the deeper meaning. The Japanese apprentice is taught that shokunin means not only having technical skill, but also implies an attitude and social consciousness. These qualities are encompassed in the word shokunin" "The shokunin demonstrates knowledge of tools and skill with them, the ability to create beauty, and the capacity to work with incredible speed. In short the pride of the shokunin is the simultaneous achievement of skill and speed. One without the other is not shokunin . . . the worse insult to a craftsman in Japan is to be called a slow worker. The relationship of a shokunin to his tools is . . . very close, for it is through the tools that the work of the shokunin is created. The bond between the shokunin and his tools is not only practical but emotional and spiritual . . . the Japanese feel that it is discourteous to look into a shokunin's tool box. A far worse breach of etiquette is to check the sharpness of the tools." At our December meeting, we are all invited to peer into a Japanese tool box.

Also on the agenda for the December meeting are the semi-annual elections of BAWA officers. I urge you to consider contributing some time to the organization. Volunteer for a position. It is essential to the existence of the organization.

Our January 16th meeting will again be in the East Bay, this time at Plywood and Lumber Sales, (PALS), in Emeryville, who will host a catered affair for BAWA members. Those interested in attending call 537 - 4096 before January 9th to reserve a place at the table. Black tie optional.

► NOTES FROM THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

We discussed the good turnout at the blacksmith shop in spite of, or more likely because of, the non-wood topic. Have we talked wood techniques to death? Art Carpenter mentioned that the Baulines Guild is made up of many different craft disciplines. Therefore they can get on with topics of mutual interest such as aesthetics, marketing and other financial aspects instead of always talking techniques of interest to just one faction of their whole group.

We are suggesting meetings with other artisans that might, or might not, have a product that could be incorporated with our woodworking. Some suggestions are glass blowers, glass etchers, leather workers, gilders, and other specialty finishers. What is your preference?

For one issue early next year we shall print approximately triple the number of newsletters for a wide distribution in an effort to reach new members. We will need suggestions of places, vendor or otherwise, to set out copies, (of course members to help deliver are welcome).

The possibility of doing promotion work as an organization keeps coming up in discussion but doesn't get any farther. At least one member, better yet a few members, need to sit down, think it through, make suggestions, ask for feedback. Too much to ask?

Meanwhile, suggestions from the last meeting are being used, there will be more.

ch

► EXHIBITS

NEW YORK CITY: "High Styles: Twentieth Century American Design" exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art. Sept 19, 1985 through Feb 16, 1986.

► SHOP TIPS

Further to Art Carpenter's method for getting a blue/black color with walnut is Robert Neville's technique, taken from the "Woodworker's Group of N.S.W., Dec '85 issue:

"LIQUID NIGHTMARE

Don't let the name of this brew scare you off, it is an old technique used to Ebonise oaks normally, or timber with the right tannic acid content.

To prepare the mixture you will need a wide mouth frog-no-clean jar, some rusty nails or metal (as long as it fits in the jar - anything rusty), vinegar and a piece of stocking to strain the final mix. Now place the rusty metal into your jar about half way up then top it up with the vinegar leaving space of about 22mm from the top of the jar, give it a good old shake and leave it for several days. It is now ready to strain into another container (not metal), place a piece of stocking over the new jar and secure it with an elastic band and pour the mix through it.

Put the metal out into the weather again to rust up. I have used this mix mainly on Tas Oak and Vic Ash, the more figured oaks it works even better on. Prepare your stock in the normal manner taking it down to 240 sand, then brush on a wash of the mix. Make sure there are no other pieces of work around to splash (hence the name Liquid Nightmare). Coat the piece thoroughly. You will notice the timber go a Purple/Grey immediately then a few minutes later Black.

Leave it overnight then lightly steelwool the surface to remove oxidation, and test it with metho for colour, if you want jet black keep applying. Personally, I go for Brown/Black with a little of the natural colour coming through. When you are happy with the colour, finish off with a light 240 sand and it is ready for finishing. I get a nice result with 2 thin coats of de-waxed shellac, a light cut and wax - it also warms to an oil finish nicely. This finish gives a believable Ebonisation as it is not a stain but chemical reaction.

Lastly, you can choose to fill the grain before finishing with a white grain filler (plaster, polyfiller) which then gives a limed effect. Experiment first, I am sure you will be pleasantly surprised."

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Excerpts from Mike Jeffreys article in the same N.S.W. newsletter on "Lighting and the Workshop: Before discussing the merits, or otherwise, of the various choices it is worth considering the end use of the work you do and under what type of lights it is likely to be used. This will narrow it down to predominantly incandescent and occasionally fluorescent unless you are into office suites in which case it will likely be the reverse.

... while fluorescents are far more efficient watt for watt they also have a couple of drawbacks. . The nature of the light is not flattering to wood. Its attribute of reducing shadows is a drawback when trying to read figure in wood.

Reflector bulbs, (incandescent), have an integral reflector which gives a focus to the beam and means you can use one in for example an angle poise lamp on your lathe and focus it right on the work. This cuts down on extraneous light entering the corners of your vision and is therefore less tiring.

I also use such a bulb in a plastic holder flat on my bench dead level with the surface I am scraping or dressing. If you have no other light source this will aid you in finding dings and scratches which are far harder to see with a conventional overhead light source.

I still use my flouros at times and most people will settle on them for a general light because they are so efficient, however I would recommend some incandescents especially on arms on stationary machinery. A mix of the two will give you the best of both these commonly available types."

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Exerpts from Ed Graves article which appeared in the Society of Philadelphia Woodworkers Dec '85 issue titled, "Safety - Watch Your Inhaling: ...substances listed as dangerous in the 'Handbook of Hazardous Materials', and which woodworkers are exposed to, include: ammonia, methyl and methylene chloride, methyl ethyl ketone, peroxide, oxalic acid, paraffin wax fumes, pentachlorophenol, toluene, and wood dust. Nearly every solvent used in thinning wood finishes and cleaning painting equipment and surfaces, is hazardous to your health if inhaled as fumes or absorbed through the skin."

▶ LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

From the weak response to Don Dupont's question of show participation, I do not think we should roll the rock uphill much longer. Those members with the desire to participate in a group show will do so with or without BAWA as they have in the past.

The upcoming show at Macy's sponsored by the Baulines Craftsmans Guild will probably be the best opportunity for a significant group show for quite some time in that; 1) It coincides with the American Craft Council conference at the Oakland Museum (as does the Pro Arts show), 2) It will provide the best possible location, space and publicity, 3) the organization network is already available and has been successful in the past.

True, this will be a juried show and not everybody will be guaranteed a place in the show. Also clear is the fact that BAWA will not be in the limelight as an organization since participants will be invited as individuals, not as a group. This does not diminish the value of BAWA for what is it; an information resource for it's members, and an excellent place to gather with friends and colleagues.

If our primary goal was to educate the public about our craft, we have failed. But that is not our mandate or apparent desire, I think. We are a rather a social club for woodworkers and there is nothing wrong with that.

It is my hope that a larger number of members will express interest in future shows and that the generously donated space at Pro Arts will be utilized next year. But a handful of people doesn't justify in my opinion, the time and expense necessary to produce a quality show.

Time is passing in any case, and members should begin working on pieces if they are interested in participating in any shows next Spring. BAWA will continue to provide the support and good company that it has in the past.

Scott Page

Dear Editor,

I am prompted to write after seeing the drawing of the abomination that is called a chair in your Nov. newsletter. Frankly, I am appalled that this kind of work is tolerated in the field of serious wood-working, and outraged that valuable museum funds would be spent to purchase what will surely end up an embarrassment hidden away in a dark corner of the Oakland Museum storeroom. I find it an insult to my intelligence that the creator of this poorly composed piece of sculpture, if you will, would have the audacity to try to pass it off as a chair. If Peter Shire would have called his creation a piece of sculpture, then it could be justifiably criticized as a poor piece of sculpture. If, however, Mr. Shire insists on calling his creation a chair, then it should be subjected to the same critical criteria that apply to chairs as functional objects. It fails miserably. I may be naive and old-fashioned, but to me "pleasing to the eye" still carries some weight. To further add to the insult, he calls it the Phidias Chair, after one of the greatest artists the world has ever known, the creator of the sculptures that adorned the Parthenon in Athens. I feel safe in saying that Phidias might be prompted to instigate slander litigation against Mr. Shire. This "chair" violates every sound design principle that Phidias believed in and expressed in his work, which has been venerated for twenty-five centuries. How long, I wonder, will Peter Shire's chair be around, much less venerated?

I applaud the Oakland Museum's commitment to the decorative arts, but I have serious reservations about their purchasing policies. When there is so much good sound design and woodworking being done right here in the Bay Area, to purchase such a work strikes me as an exercise in trendy sensationalism, as well as a demonstration of pure and simple bad taste. To me a chair should say sit, otherwise it fails it its purpose. This chair says the same to me, only one letter has been omitted.

A von Brucke

Dear BAWA,

I heartily support payment to our executive committee members - as much as the budget will allow - with the chairperson getting 50% to 100% extra. You might pay on the basis of meetings attended and/or work on the newsletter.

Glen Klitzenberger

CONNOISSEUR'S WORLD

MY EYE by Thomas Hoving

THE LIVELIEST ART

The more I brood about it, the more I'm convinced that America's most vital, honest, and creative arts are its decorative arts, not the so-called high arts. To me, contemporary painting and sculpture are becoming hysterical exercises in stealing from the past or cribbing from other artists. As for architecture, well, the once-proud mother of the arts has plummeted to the status of a pimply, adolescent kid sister, nattering incessantly about fads.

The decorative arts are strong and exciting for a host of reasons. They have an

the decorative arts have been, and continue to be, essentially solid, practical, down-to-earth, and adaptable to the marketplace.

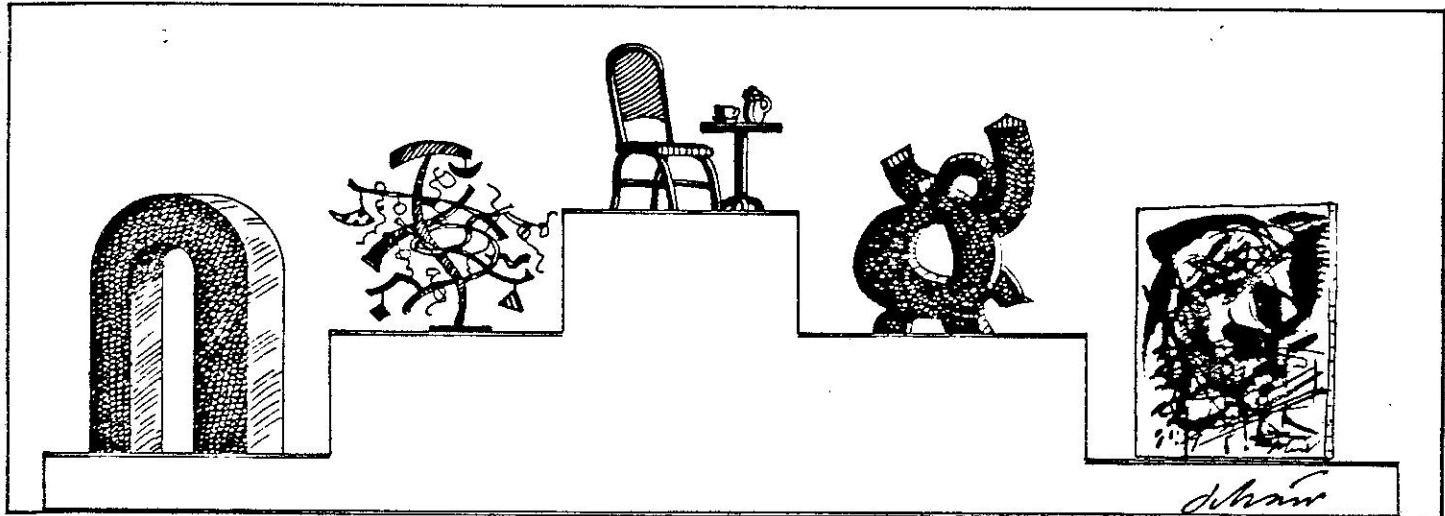
The high arts have never been that. They are supposed to serve other than human tasks, expressing the ideal, showing us what is suprahuman or what is all but unbearable. And much high art has done just that, even though a percentage of it has always been unabashed propaganda, commissioned to depict the courage of some sniveling tyrant, the immortal stature of a bunch of scantily clad pagan gods, or a battlefield without pain.

Almost everything that surrounds us in our homes—our furniture and fabrics, our wall coverings and tableware, cutlery and crockery—has direct antecedents in the

reasons that Michelangelo is so great is that he respected classical antiquity but didn't copy it. Raphael, on the other hand, sometimes borrowed a bit too much from Roman statues, which has always made him look slightly inferior. But the decorative arts can be inventive and derivative at the same time, mix a dozen styles, and come out looking healthier.

A silver vase can have the rotund and graceful body of an ancient Greek krater, a base as squat as an ancient Egyptian mastaba, the fiery glow of art deco enamel, the loops and whorls of the French mideighteenth century—and still be heavenly. A chair can possess the traces of a variety of styles from Renaissance through Sheraton to Bauhaus and be a knockout.

Great temples, palaces, and other edi-



awesome respect for quality and craftsmanship. Their traditions go legitimately back to the very beginnings of time. They relish being eclectic. And they are in harmony and at peace with human beings.

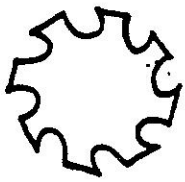
The fine arts (and perhaps also architecture) have come unanchored from their traditional relationship to the human, in both spirit and scale. The decorative arts have never had that luxury. Spartan or opulent, the "decorative" arts can never be merely decorative; they must be utilitarian. Their functionalism has meant that, no matter how eclectic their history,

earliest moments of human history. A glass very similar to the one you used at lunch could easily have been in Aristotle's cupboard. Something not too different from the chair you'll ease into this evening could have been sat upon by King Solomon—well, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, anyway. It's almost as if every object, implement, chair, or textile is a piece of a marvelous time machine physically linked to all of mankind's complex and fascinating visual history.

High art has always been suspect if it draws too glibly from the past. One of the

fices are designed in highfalutin styles—only soon to look outdated. Grand or outrageous styles in painting and sculpture mature and then fade into decadence or weakness. But the decorative arts go on forever, unhampered by the pomp and recititude of ersatz aesthetic rules and regulations, unmoved by the shock of the new. That is what is so good and exciting about the contemporary decorative-arts scene. The works being produced aren't symbolic of some higher credo. They are stylish, beyond stylish, beyond style, and always humane.

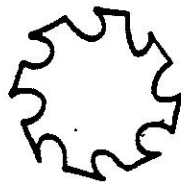
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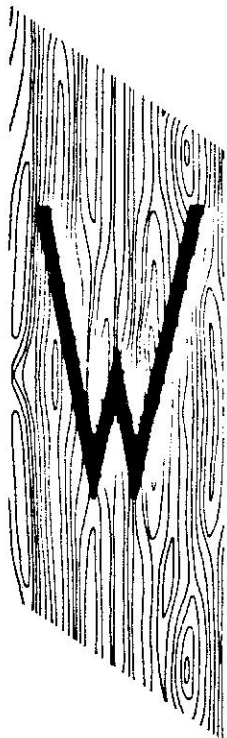
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Dick Taylor still could use the "seconds" from your slide or photo collection to show future woodworkers what is being done today. He would be happy to supply a contribution form for your IRS records.

CALENDAR

CLASSES

U.C. Berkeley Extension Curriculum Re: Custom Design and Marketing:

Jan. 16th, 5:30 to 7:30 pm - Free Information Session re: Spring offerings at UC Extension Design Studio at 51 Waller St., San Francisco. For full brochure call 642 - 1061

Jan 25th, Marketing Seminar presented in cooperation with ASID, IBD, Showplace Square and Western Merchandise Mart. Its focus will be on basic marketing techniques that designers can use in promoting and selling their services.

Feb. 22, Custom Design Symposium at UC Extension Center and Design Studio in San Francisco, will feature professionals engaged in making and using custom work and will be aimed at helping designers expand their resources for personalizing interior spaces.

COMPETITION

California Crafts Museum, located in Ghiradelli Square is producing: LIGHTING, SEATING AND FLOOR COVERING 1986. A competitive all media exhibition, March 29 to June 15, open to California residents. The intention of the competition is to present the cutting edge in lighting, seating and floor covering. Artists not currently working in these areas are encouraged to enter.

Entries may be single or multimedia original work executed within the last 2 years and not previously exhibited in the Bay Area.

Dates to Note: Feb. 18th, slides or drawings and entry fee due.
Apr. 3rd, reception

Inquiries: Jeanne Low, 493-5548, Joy Stocksdales, 841-2008, Caryl Hansen, 482-5633



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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.

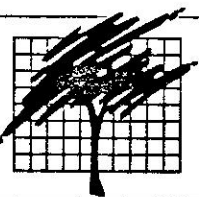
Membership dues are \$20/year, for which any member may participate fully in the Association, in accordance with the guidelines set forth in the By-Laws. This includes voting power on any issue brought before the membership for a vote, notification of the monthly shop talks and demonstrations put on 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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