

SOUTH BAY WOODWORKERS' NEWS

Volume 33, Issue 6

June 27, 2023

President's Column

By Jay Perrine



Well summer is basically here (will be by the June SBWW meeting) and I have already taken one class. June 1st I flew to Seattle, rented a car, and drove to Bellingham, Washington. I had paid a deposit three

years ago for a Northwest Native mask carving class. I read about this class for years in Woodworker West. First two attempts I failed as the classes were full. I finally learned you get on his list, and then when you get an e-mail that registration is open - act quickly!

The instructor Scott Jensen, is 3rd generation Danish, but living in the Pacific Northwest he has become an expert in the carving techniques of the indigenous people.

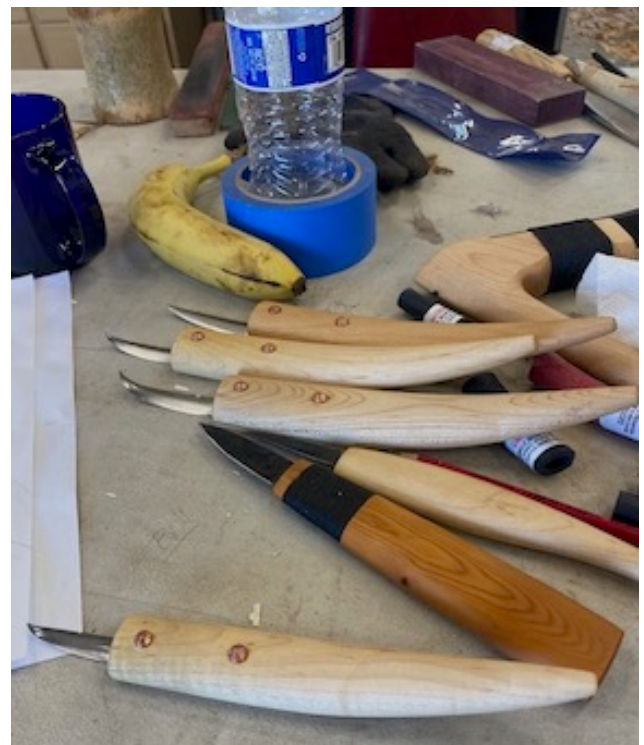


For many years he has sold masks through a Seattle gallery - which now wants only crafts made by native, carvers despite how traditional

Scott's masks appear. At 74, semi-retired Scott has been teaching for about 40 years. (And only a handful of students have gone to the emergency room - an issue I wanted some insight on when we started).

Post-COVID this is the first class he has taught in three years. He is only doing small classes of 8 students each. We could do whichever objects we wanted within his area of expertise - such as potlatch boxes, canoe paddles, large more ornate masks, etc. Most of the students attending my 3 day class had taken classes from Scott 2 to 7 times! .

One other student and I (one year my junior) had never used the specialized native tools we were asked to buy



A fellow from Portland drove up and brought some freshly harvested Alder. (Alder is not native to the area, so we arranged to have it delivered to the class). So two new carving masks students were taught BOTH how to use the specialized tools and pretty much step by step (orally, no written manual) on how to carve a mask.



First remove the bark using the hand adzes. Next to each student's chair, at the two long tables in his studio, was a tree stump on which we rested our hunk of alder (carefully band sawn through the pith so we had half of a log) and holding with one hand cut with the tool in the other hand. First cut the piece so it looks like a gable roof on a building with low walls. Then out of nowhere he says draw on tracing paper the outline of the facial parts and transfer to the blank. This is done by flipping the drawing over and drawing on those lines with a watercolor pencil, such as the Stabilo 'All'. When you press the drawing against wet wood, it leaves a faint line which you can re-draw as a guide for your carving. Use a pull saw to cut here and there before using adze to hog some

wood away from chin, forehead and over the nose. Then the knife work starts. Again I never have used these double-edged knives with upturned curves at the tips. He showed us how (either on our masks or on one he had for demo). He consulted with the experienced students in between our beginner's lessons.

Class was Friday, Saturday and Sunday with 4pm departure on the last day. Big social event was dinner on Saturday night (salmon on the grill) in their patio (studio was on the same property as his house). After dessert, Scott and his wife Courtney suddenly appear through the door wearing native blanket-robies which she had made.



Turns out Courtney had an Aunt by marriage that was Native. The last few years of that Aunt's life Courtney got some lessons in how to weave in the traditional style.

During the class it was made clear to us that we WOULD NOT finish a mask during three short days of lessons as beginners. I got the nose carved, the recessed area near the eyes, and almost finished the lips when it was time to leave.

I wrapped it up in plastic (the wood was so green it was weeping fluid), packed my tools, and flew home with an incomplete mask. But I had learned to swing a hand adze, use the many shapes of knives to cut



concave shapes, and to use a straight blade to cut convex shapes. It would have helped to have a scrap piece of green alder to practice making the cuts on before doing it on the mask; especially since I was trying to meet Scott's nearly perfect standards. He did tell me a few times that for a first timer, I was doing very well.

Scott Jensen's website is SpeakingCedar.com

All this is just to describe a class to inspire SBWW members to consider doing such a thing this summer!

Monthly Meeting June 27 7pm Bob Konigsberg

Bob will discuss the progress on the home he has been building for himself in Gilroy for the last 5 years.

Meeting Location

Saratoga Federated Church
Postal Annex Building
14376 Saratoga Ave.
Saratoga, CA

Map and directions:

<https://www.southbaywoodworkers.org/>

May Program in Review

Jay Perrine created a walnut altar table for the First Congregational Church in



Campbell. The wood was procured from Moore and Newton in San Leandro. The table measures 8 feet long by 33 inches wide by 32 inches tall and 3 inches thick. Smith & Co's Oak and Teak epoxy



legs to make it easier to slide the altar table around on the wood floor. This allows the pulpit area to be repurposed for other types of presentations or activities in the church.

Proper Wood Finishes of Sunnyvale was hired to apply the conversion varnish finish and do the final assembly of the altar table.

May Show n' Tell

Jay Perrine made eight coffee tables for Humboldt State University when his daughter was a student there in 2010. Jay and Jennifer recently went by the school during another trip and Jennifer wanted to see the coffee tables.

All of the dorms are named for different trees. Most of the tables are made of slabs that match the name of the dorm in which they were placed.

was used to glue the planks together with Domino loose tenons added for alignment. The mortises for the tusk tenons were started using a jig with a template guide attached to the router. A mortising chisel was used to clean up the tenon walls after hogging out most of the waste with a drill.

The two end pieces are bolted to a frame of 1/4 inch thick steel that Jay had powder coated in a brown color that matches the wood nicely.



Expansion and contraction of the top is accommodated by slots cut in the steel frame to allow the screws to move. Felt pads were secured to the bottom of the



Jay and his daughter Danielle 2010

Steve Kelen brought in a sample of four fonts carved in a small piece of Sapele. The carvings were done on a CNC controlled router. The samples will be shown to neighbors of another member in anticipation of doing a project for them.



Jim Bender shared the T shirt he is selling for a fundraiser for the Adriatic Maritime Institute that does wooden boat building in Croatia and Bosnia with foster youth



2023 Program Responsibilities

June 27	Bob Konigsberg Update on the house build Matteo McCullough
July 25	Steve Kelem
August 22	Allan Kutach Terry O'Donnell
September 26	Dave Burkett- Marquetry Projects
October 24	Bill Turner
November 28	Ron Gerard Dennis Yamamoto
December	Christmas Winter Holiday Party TBD

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Bill Henzel enjoyed seeing this table in Paris, France. The table is part of the furnishings in his sister-in-law's apartment there.

